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Robert Browning, 1875, by Field Telford.

POEMS
OF
ALFRED TENNYSON
AND
ROBERT BROWNING

EDITED
WITH INTRODUCTIONS AND NOTES
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PREFACE.

THIS volume contains the selection of the poems of Alfred Tennyson and Robert Browning prescribed as part of the requirements for careful study in English Literature for the examinations for High School Leaving and University Matriculation in 1897. The editor has endeavoured to bring together from many quarters whatever critical apparatus elementary students will require, so as to make possible for such as use the volume the thorough study of the poetry it contains.

The text of the poems is drawn from Macmillan's Globe Edition of Tennyson's Works, which represents the poet's last revision, and from the standard edition of Browning published by Messrs. Smith Elder, and Company. The Notes are full, but they aim not so much to satisfy the student of these selections as to open up various veins of interest which may be profitably worked in class-room study. Special attention is given, because of their importance in the study of poetry, to the metres of the poems.

The Notes, especially those to Browning's poems, have had the advantage of the collaboration of Miss Lizette Andrews Fisher, for which the editor desires here to make acknowledgment and to express his thanks.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

	PAGE
BIBLIOGRAPHY	viii
INTRODUCTIONS—	
I.—Alfred Tennyson: His Life	xiii
Alfred Tennyson: His Work	xxvi
II.—Robert Browning: His Life	xxxvii
Robert Browning: His Work	xlv
POEMS OF ALFRED TENNYSON—	
	TEXT NOTES
From <i>Poems, Chiefly Lyrical</i> , 1830.	
The Poet	53 139
From <i>Poems, by Alfred Tennyson</i> , 1833.	
The Lady of Shalott	56 143
Enone	63 148
From <i>Poems, by Alfred Tennyson</i> , 1842.	
St. Agnes' Eve	72 156
The Epic and Morte d'Arthur	74 158
Break, Break, Break	86 184
From <i>Enoch Arden, etc.</i> , 1864.	
The Voyage	87 184
In the Valley of the Canteretz	90 188

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

vii

POEMS OF ROBERT BROWNING—

From *Dramatic Lyrics (Bells and Pomegranates, No. III.), 1842.*

Cavalier Tunes—	TEXT	NOTES
I.—Marching Along . . .	93	190
II.—Give a Rouse. . . .	94	193
III.—Boot and Saddle . . .	95	193
My Last Duchess	96	194

From *Dramatic Romances and Lyrics (Bells and Pomegranates, No. VII.), 1845.*

“How They Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix.”	98	197
Home Thoughts, from Abroad . . .	102	201

From *Men and Women, 1855.*

Love among the Ruins	103	202
Up at a Villa—Down in the City . .	106	203
The Guardian Angel	112	208
Andrea del Sarto	115	210
An Epistle of Karshish	125	219

From *Dramatis Personæ, 1864.*

Prospice	136	224
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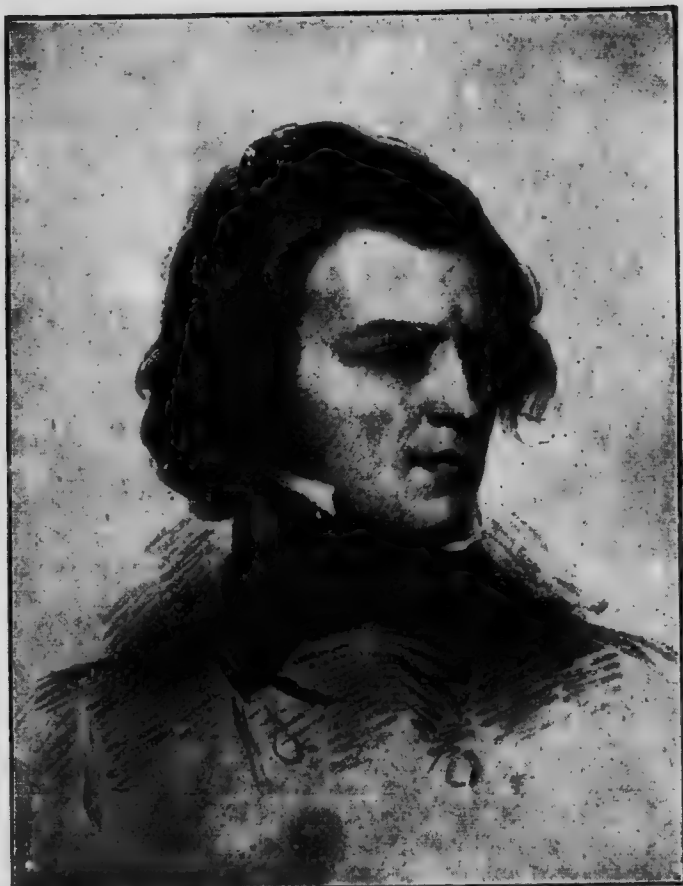
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INTRODUCTIONS



Portrait of Tennyson, about 1842.

Tennyson



SOMERSBY RECTORY, TENNYSON'S BIRTHPLACE.

INTRODUCTIONS.

I.

I.—Tennyson : His Life.

In Somersby. A little wooded hamlet in eastern Lincolnshire; behind, the white road climbing up to Thetford and the wolds; below, the brook slipping down past many a thorp off to the North Sea; pasture land about, dotted with sheep; misty hills afar-off; such is Somersby. As you come into the village by the hedge-row road winding upward from Horncastle, you see only one house of importance. It is a large rambling two story house, with tiled roof and white walls, standing amidst

elms and poplars, and overlooking from its side windows a quiet secluded lawn, edged with yews. This house in the early years of the nineteenth century was the rectory of the Rev. George Clayton Tennyson, vicar of the hamlet of Grimsby, Bag Enderby, and Somersby. He was a just, austere man, gifted in many ways, fond of music, a mathematician, linguist and artist. If rather a hard man, even in bargains, his hardness was compensated for in the family circle by the tenderness of his wife, daughter of the vicar of the neighbouring town of Louth.

The rectory was large, but it was none too large for the children that came to fill it—four daughters and eight sons—of whom the fourth, born August 6th, 1809, was Alfred Tennyson. The family were all given to books. No sooner did the boys learn to write than they played author; and essays, poems, novels, tragedies were the story of their boyhood. Alfred composed his first line of poetry before he could read. During a storm he was heard declaiming—“I hear a voice that’s speaking in the wind.” He wrote his first verses when a bit of a school-boy at Louth; they were about the flowers of the garden. “Yes, you can write,” said his brother Charles. He wrote an elegy on his grandmother, and his grandfather, giving him ten shillings, said with the wisdom of age, “There, that is the first money you have

earned by your poetry, and, take my word for it, it will be the last." His facility in those early days was wonderful; he was not twelve years old when he completed an epic of some four thousand lines—even the mature poet was not so ambitious. And a passionate devotion to poetry possessed him. When the news of Byron's death penetrated into that remote household, it came with a thrill of infinite grief the poet never forgot. "'Byron was dead!' I thought the whole world was at an end. I thought everything was over and finished for everyone—that nothing else mattered. I remember I walked out alone, and carved 'Byron is dead' into the sandstone." One thinks of Jane Welsh away in the north and the "awful and dreary blank" that came over creation when she heard the same words.

As the boys grew up they walked to the village-school of Holywell Glen, a spot beautiful with trees and terraced rocks. Still later they were sent to the grammar-school of Louth. Leaving Louth at the age of eleven, Tennyson was for eight years home in Somersby, studying with tutors, reading and writing prodigiously, going over to Horncastle for music and to meet one who afterwards became his wife, Miss Emily Sellwood, niece of Sir John Franklin. Then there were the long tramps over the wolds, all the boys smoking; reveries under the stars

or in the twilight—"He would sit on a gate
gawmin' about him," said farmer Baumber;
the winter evenings passed by the family in
music and reading. The summers were spent
down at a little sea-side cottage at Mablethorpe,
in full view of the fens, where—

"Stretched wide and wild the waste enormous marsh,"
and of the

"Wild wave in the wide North Sea
Green-glimmering towards the summit."

How all this pervades Tennyson's poetry;
how it streams back to him in memory,—the
'ridged wolds,' 'the sand-built ridge,' the
'lowly cottage,'—

"The woods that belt the grey hill-side,
The seven elms, the poplars four
That stand beside my father's door,
And chiefly from the brook that loves
To purl o'er matted cress, and ribbed sand,
Or dimple in the dark of rushy coves."

—*Ode to Memory.*

Such memories never vanished; in the suscep-
tible, tenacious mind of the poet they linger,
welling up with fountain-like strength and
freshness forever.

Early authorship. In 1827 the eldest son,
Frederick, went up to Cambridge, leaving
Charles and Alfred to carry on their devotion
to reading, rambling, smoking, and poetry.
Once, as the old nurse relates, they planned

a distant expedition that called for more money than the tight purse of the father would allow. Why not print your poems, their confidant, the coachman, suggested. Out of the litter of MSS. they culled a hundred pages of boyish verse imitative of Byron and Scott, called the collection *Poems by Two Brothers*, sold it to a Louth



SOMERSBY CHURCH.

bookseller, and, rich with £10 for the copyright, set off on their projected tour through the Lincolnshire churches.

At Cambridge University. On October 28th, 1828, Charles and Alfred joined Frederick at Cambridge. They were shy country lads, with no liking for society or for sports and interests usual in university life. Alfred, however, be-

came a member of a small society of choice spirits, which, under the name of the Apostles, brought together a dozen students, every one of whom became afterwards famous in law, letters, or the church. Such were Alford, Merivale, Milnes, Trench, Maurice, Spedding, and, above all, Arthur Hallam, younger than Tennyson, a singularly sweet and brilliant genius, "as near perfection," said his friend, "as mortal man can be."

"We held debate, a band
Of youthful friends, on mind and art,
And labour, and the changing mart,
And all the framework of the land."

—*In Memoriam.*

Tennyson, though an Apostle, did not cease to be a disciple of the muses. The Chancellor's prize, the goal of ambition of all the college poets, fell to him in 1829 for his verses on "Timbuctoo." He wrote steadily, gladly reading aloud his poems to friends dropping in at his rooms evenings.

Poems, Chiefly Lyrical, 1830. Thus was the material made ready for the poet's first volume, the thin precious little book called *Poems, chiefly Lyrical*, 1830. Here were contained his memories of home scenes like *The Ode to Memory* and *Recollections of the Arabian Nights*, his youthful romance like *Claribel*, *Lilian*, *The Sleeping*

Beauty, The Dying Swan, etc. Here was the advent of a new poet ; one who had, to cite Hallam, luxuriance of imagination, yet control over it, power of entering into ideal characters and moods, picturesque delineation of objects, holding them fused in strong emotion, variety of lyrical measures, responsive to every changing feeling ; elevation, soberness, impressiveness of thought. But the tone and manner were new, provoking opposition and challenging and receiving criticism. The poets to whom Tennyson's verses were most akin—Wordsworth and Keats—were themselves still unaccepted by the public. Save from a few readers, the poet of 1830 met no acclaim.

In 1830 there was an exciting page of romance when Tennyson, Hallam, and some other Apostles went to Spain to join in the movement against Spanish despotism. Their movement was quixotic, and came to nothing as far as Spanish liberty was concerned ; but it did much to cement the friendship of Tennyson and Hallam. This friendship grew closer, even when the poet, on his father's death in 1831, withdrew from Cambridge to his home in Somersby. Hallam and Spedding and Garden would come down to join the family group. That life is recorded, with special regard to Hallam, in *In Memoriam*,—

"O bliss, when all in circle drawn
About him, heart and ear were fed
To hear him as he lay and read
The Tuscan poets on the lawn :

Or in the all-golden afternoon
A guest, or happy sister, sung,
Or here she brought the harp and flung
A ballad to the brightening moon."

In 1831 the bond of friendship was made still stronger by Hallam's engagement to the poet's sister Emily.

Poems, 1833. The following year, when Hallam went up to London and the study of the law, Tennyson remained in Somersby working on his second volume. This time his name appeared, *Poems, by Alfred Tennyson, 1833*. Here the poet has a subtler and stronger lyrical gift than in his earlier work, and he adds to it an ever deepening grasp of life. Here, too, he enters on three phases of his most characteristic work : reproduction of classical story in the *Lotos-Eaters*, Arthurian myth in *The Lady of Shalott*, and the English domestic idyll in *The Miller's Daughter*.

In London. On September 15th, 1833, Arthur Hallam, who had been long ailing, died abroad. The family at Somersby were plunged in affliction, and Tennyson, whose loss was not less than his sister's, threw himself into work chiefly in London. For ten years he wrote con-

stantly, but with the exception of a stray poem in annual collections, he printed nothing. They were years of silence and meditation that genius must have. They were years of study of the problems of science, life, and society. Some of his college friends were in London, and saw something of the poet either in the gatherings of the Anonymous Club, or dining at the Cock in Fleet Street, "sitting late into the evening over the pint of port and cigars." Carlyle had come up to live in Chelsea, London, and between him and the poet there sprang up a lasting friendship. With Carlyle, "Omar" Fitzgerald, Spedding, and Milnes as associates, Tennyson kept touch with the world; while by an occasional visit or excursion into the country he kept touch with nature.

Poems of 1842. Finally, in 1842, he broke silence with the two volumes of *Poems by Alfred Tennyson*. The volumes contained the best poems of the earlier volumes, and many new poems such as *The Epic (Morte d'Arthur)*, *The Gardener's Daughter*, *Dora*, *Locksley Hall*, *Ulysses*, *Sir Galahad*, *Break, Break, Break*. In this volume Tennyson fully realized himself—it was representative of his best, of his union of power and sweetness, of his rich pictorial art, and of faith in humanity and in progress. It was received with instant and wide-spread favour, conquering even the critics.

Two pictures of him at this time are given by his two friends, Carlyle and his wife. Jane Welsh Carlyle's is womanly: "A very handsome man, and a noble-hearted one, with something of the gipsy in his appearance, which for me is perfectly charming." But how the poet lives in the portrait Carlyle sent Emerson! "A great shock of rough, dusky-dark hair, bright, laughing, hazel eyes; massive aquiline face, most massive, yet most delicate; of sallow brown complexion, almost Indian-looking; clothes cynically loose, free-and-easy; smokes infinite tobacco. His voice is musically metallic,—fit for loud laughter and piercing wail, and all that may lie between; speech and speculation free and plenteous; I do not meet, in these late decades, such company over a pipe!"

In Memoriam, the laureateship, 1850. Little by little Tennyson's circle of friends increased, embracing even men of political prominence like Gladstone. It was therefore not difficult to secure him a pension of £200 a year, which set him free from anxiety about money. In 1847 *The Princess* was published, giving the poet's interpretation of the woman question, which had begun to disturb traditional social ideas and order. In 1850, on the death of Wordsworth, Tennyson, not without some hard feelings on the part of the envious, received the

laurel. The same year, after a quiet growth of ten years in the poet's mind, *In Memoriam* was issued. It was a series of elegies commemorating the loss of Arthur Hallam, and showing the poet's thought involved in the deepest problems of life and religion. The third event of this remarkable year was the poet's marriage—after an engagement prolonged, because of the poet's poverty, for ten years—to his friend of early days, Emily Sellwood. They settled in Twickenham, but removed three years later to their best known home—"Farringford," Freshwater, in the Isle of Wight.

At Farringford. The first work from this new home was *Maud*, 1855, a tragic love-story reflecting the social unrest of the middle of the century. In the *Maud* volume were printed *The Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington*, *The Charge of the Light Brigade*, and *The Brook*. Four years later followed the first volume of the *Idylls of the King*, based mainly on Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*, containing *Enid*, *Vivien*, *Elaine*, and *Guinevere*. To these were joined subsequently *The Holy Grail*, *Pelleas and Ettarre*, *The Coming of Arthur*, *The Passing of Arthur*, *The Last Tournament*, and *Balin and Balan*. The whole series, completed in 1885, constituted an epic on the story of Arthur and his Round Table, in which the many idylls

reflected many phases of a central theme of modern life,—the relations of men and women, and their effects on individual lives and on the framework of society. In 1864 Tennyson added to his noble group of English idylls the *Enoch Arden* volume, which included *Aylmer's Field* and the *Northern Farmer*.

The narrative of later years is the story of constant production and of increasing fame. In 1869 the poet, "frightened away by hero-worshippers," built a new home on Blackdown, near Haselmere, Surrey, henceforth dividing his time between Farringford and Aldworth. It is from these two residences that he took his title of baron, when in 1884 he accepted the peerage he had before refused.

His dramas. Entering on a form of composition to which he had long been tentatively approaching, Tennyson devoted himself in his remaining years chiefly to dramatic composition. He gave the world *Queen Mary*, 1875; *Harold*, 1877; *The Falcon*, 1879; *The Cup*, 1881; *The Promise of May*, 1882; *Becket*, 1884; *The Foresters*, 1892,—all of which have been produced on the stage, some with indifferent, others with pronounced success. Scattered through these years of dramatic work were the many short poems that make up the various volumes—*Ballads*, 1880, which contains the stir-

ring patriotic poems of *The Revenge* and *The Defence of Lucknow*; *Tiresias*, 1885; *Demeter*, 1889; and *The Death of Ænone*, 1892.

Old age came upon the poet with his powers unimpaired, and death found him girt with his singing robe, in his heart faith in progress, in the Gleam, reaching for vaster issues, and strong in hope to meet his Pilot beyond the bar of the great deep. On October 6th, 1892, he passed away.



GRAVE OF TENNYSON IN THE POET'S CORNER, WESTMINSTER ABBEY.



SOMERSBY BROOK.

II.—Tennyson: His Work.

The Victorian era. The Victorian era, dated usually from 1832-1901, was an era of development, expansion, and progress. It began while the ideas of the French Revolution were still glowing. To the youthful Victorians the poetry of the earlier romantic group—Wordsworth, Coleridge, Scott, Byron, Shelley, Keats—was like a radiant dawn. New movements, too, got under way. Science marked its power in 1832 by the founding of the British Association. Religion became a new interest from the beginning of the Oxford movement in 1833. And the clash of science and religion gave rise to a spiritual unrest which is not yet quieted.

The spirit of romance recreated English art from 1849 in the work of the English Pre-Raphaelites—Rossetti, Morris, Burne Jones. The doctrine of women's rights was the last heritage of the eighteenth to the nineteenth century, but its practical application in all phases of human activity belongs to the Victorian era, when a woman held the first place in English life and lent to woman's claims her illustrious prestige. The Victorian era saw the application of steam and electricity to manufacture and communication; an unparalleled development of industries and population, the rise of immense commercial cities, the extension of the British empire to the Seven Seas. The spirit of the era was a spirit of progress and of wide-spread democracy pervading government, education, and social thought, and with democracy there was a growing humanitarianism.

Tennyson as representative poet. Of that era Tennyson is the most representative poet. His work was as it were, a mirror held up to the movements and interests of his age, and the span of his poetical activity is virtually coincident with the Victorian period. His first book appeared in 1830, his last in 1892; at twenty-one he wrote *Mariana*, at eighty-one he wrote *Crossing the Bar*.

The poet's material. Each great poet read

aright yields us his interpretation of certain great aspects of life and thought, particularly nature, the social movements of humanity, religion, human experience and story, and beauty.

Tennyson and nature. Nature was a primary fact in Tennyson's life and work. His country breeding and his early love of the Romantic poets combined to interest him in nature. "I was in the habit," said Tennyson, "of chronicling in four or five words or more whatever might strike me as picturesque in nature." He was especially happy in his observation of the minute beauties of nature. He catches the peculiar features of the trees, their aspect in spring-time—the chestnut buds "glistening to the breezy blue" (*The Miller's Daughter*), "the rosy plumelets of the larch" (*In Memoriam*), "the million emeralds" breaking from the "ruby-budded" lindens (*Maud*). He notes innumerable vignettes in nature like those of *The Brook*, such as—

"I make the netted sunbeam dance
Against my sandy shallows,"

—a picture of rare felicity both for truth and beauty. He touches with power the ocean wave,—

"The league-long roller thundering on the reef."
—*Enoch Arden*.

Or, still better,—

“A wild wave in the wide North Sea
Green-glimmering toward the summit, bears, with all
Its stormy crests that smoke against the skies.”

—*Launcelot and Elaine.*

His English idylls are full of the quiet beauties of lawn and garden and stream.

Tennyson does not share in the spiritual communion with nature that was Wordsworth's, nor in the wildness and loneliness of the nature that Byron loved, nor in the ethereal aspects of nature in Shelley. He loves the processes of nature and the pure picturesque. This habit of minute and exact observation of detail makes him akin to the scientists of his time. Indeed, he goes further than any other poet in his interest in the processes of evolution. Hence the significance of his little poem:—

“Flower in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies,
I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
Little flower—but *if* I could understand
What you are, root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God and man is.”

Political and social life. Tennyson expressed his general attitude in political and social changes when he said “I believe in progress, but I would conserve the hopes of men.” Throughout his poetry he voices “a golden

mean" between the "falsehoods of extremes." In the first *Locksley Hall* he is almost revolutionary,—

"Forward, forward let us range,
Let the great world spin for ever down the ringing
grooves of change."

In *In Memoriam* the cry has grown milder,—

"Let knowledge grow from more to more."

In *Locksley Hall Sixty Years After* he became, like Carlyle and Ruskin, reactionary, voicing something like despair of democracy.

In the main Tennyson believed in progress, but it is ordered, not revolutionary, progress. His times were working out democratic changes into law and constitution. He praises England, therefore, for reconciling an expanding liberty with form and precedent,—

"A land of settled government,
A land of old and sure renown,
Where Freedom slowly broadens down
From precedent to precedent."

—You ask me *Why*.

And his patriotism kept pace with the growing empire of Great Britain. In his later poems he touches the note of imperialism—a note of unity not of conquest.

Yet he was never a cosmopolite. He was never generous, never fair to France, nor to the French Revolution—"the red-fool fury of the

Seine." He never got quite beyond the shores of England, nor quite beyond the Victorian era. Within these limits he is the devoted poet of his country, her history, her achievements. After Shakspeare, he is the greatest patriotic poet of England. He has given us the words in which we think of the heroism of the British race—the Charge of the Light Brigade, the deeds of Wellington, the fight of the "Revenge."

"There is no land like England
Where'er the light of day be ;
There are no hearts like English hearts,
Such hearts of oak as they be."

—*The Foresters.*

Tennyson and religion. Tennyson shared like his friends Carlyle, Clough, Maurice, in the reawakened religious consciousness of the Victorian era. But he was no extremist; he sympathized with "honest doubt"; he frankly accepted the growth of science, the theory of evolution, and faced the new problems of life and destiny that evolution forced upon the religious world. In *In Memoriam* he expressed his creed. It was a creed of faith, rather than of reason,—the faith of a Christian evolutionist. He believed that through all life's mysteries a divine purpose persists,—that, through the darkness, the world's great altar stairs slope up to God; he saw the movement of the whole creation towards one far-off, divine event; he

trusted "the larger hope" that embraced God, immortality, and the ultimate transformation of evil into good.

Social relations. Above all Tennyson was interested in the relations of men and women in love and marriage. To that his popularity is in a large measure due. Romantic portraits of women made his first poems. His popular successes are his idyllic love-stories in verse, like *The Lady of Shalott*, which is pure romance, *The Miller's Daughter*, *Dora*, *The Gardener's Daughter*, which are domestic idylls. He even ventured on a verse treatment of the woman question in *The Princess*. Here Tennyson was not seer enough to anticipate the great, wholesome development of woman's education, opportunity, and achievements during the last fifty years. *The Princess* has become, therefore, like its prototype *Love's Labour's Lost*, only a graceful elaboration of fancy, a chain, however, in which its jewelled lyrics forever sparkle.

Tennyson's *Idylls of the King* seem at first reading to be only modernizations of Arthurian romances gathered from Malory's *Morted' Arthur* and from the *Mabinogion*. Looked at nearer, they become his interpretation of society from the point of view of the manifold relations of men and women. Poem by poem through the *Idylls* we see the disintegration of society—the Round Table—through the passion of Lancelot

and Arthur's Queen. For Tennyson's interpretation of right love was eminently sane yet high—it was a romantic devotion reconciled with ordered, noble living. "Upon the sacredness of home life," his son tells us, "he would maintain, the stability and greatness of a nation largely depend."

Tennyson's style. Tennyson's predominant aptitude was his poetic workmanship. Artistic excellence was his conscious creed. "To get the workmanship," he said, "as near perfect as possible is the best chance of going down the stream of time." Virgil's influence and the influence of Keats combined to inspire and guide Tennyson's sedulous care for style. His style is never harsh; he said once he never ended one word with the letter "s," and began the next with the same letter. He decks his verse with highly-wrought intaglios of thought; hence the many quotations from his works. He is a master of representative harmonies—from "the moan of doves in immemorial elms" to the clash of Bedivere's armour. Sometimes, as in *Dora* and *Enoch Arden*, he affects the simple. But by nature he loved the ornate, and his power to transform the simple into the ornate was a marvellous gift. To that power we owe the glorious classical reproductions *The Lotus-Eaters* and his crowning piece *Ulysses*. The *Idylls* are marked by a stately diction essen-

tially Tennysonian. The fault of his later style—its tendency to over-elaboration, to hollow ornament, to mere diction—grew out of this fundamental characteristic.

Tennyson's lyrics are among his undisputed great achievements. His power over mere language, the power to reach down by his music of verse into the depths of our sub-consciousness, gives his lyrics a grace and power that put them almost among our best. He blends, in a lower degree, the essential gifts of Keats, Shelley, and Wordsworth. His range is wide—from the patriotic ballad like *The Charge of the Light Brigade* to the delicate echo of *Welt-schmerz* in "*Tears, idle tears.*" He is essentially the lyric poet of the tender, evanescent emotions, which he renders with an insistent pathos,—

"Short swallow-flights of song, that dip
Their wings in tears and skim away."

Summary. Tennyson was then a harmonizer of science and beauty in his interpretation of nature ; a poet of the golden mean in religion, politics, life ; a representative poet of his age, and so a popular one. But the greatest poets are "not for one age but for all time." Tennyson does not illumine the greatest heights and depths of the tossing sea of life. He comes rather in the noon of British empire, like Virgil, as the poet of national greatness, natural beauty, noble serenity, lasting art. He is the English

Virgil, and we can apply to him many of his own lines to the Roman Virgil,—

“Landscape-lover, lord of language”

“All the chosen coin of fancy flashing out from many a golden phrase”

“All the charm of all the muses often flowering in a lonely word.”

Perhaps we might even add,—

“Wielder of the stateliest measure ever moulded by the lips of man.”



“Flower in the crannied wall.”

STATUE OF TENNYSON, LINCOLN.



Elizabeth Barrett Browning, 1860, by Field Talsourd.

II.

I.—Robert Browning: His Life.

In Camberwell. Robert Browning was born May 7th, 1812, in Camberwell, then a pleasant suburb of London, on the Surrey side. The poet of modern intellectual life had, therefore, from the first an intimate relation to London, "the quick forge and working-house of thought." He was the only son of Robert Browning, a well-to-do clerk of the Bank of England, and Sarah Ann Wiedemann, daughter of a ship-owner of Dundee. The father had keen literary taste, a love of books and prints, and wrote tolerable verses, after the school of Pope. "The old gentleman's brain," said his son, "was a storehouse of literary and philosophical antiquities. He was completely versed in mediæval legend, and seemed to have known Paracelsus, Faustus, and even Talmudic personages, personally." The mother, to whom the son was passionately devoted, was a woman of beautiful nature, of deeply religious feeling and of artistic musical taste.

His childhood was serenely happy. He would listen, deeply moved, to his mother's music, or sit on his father's knee, to hear the Tale of Troy, for which they sought illustrations in the depths of the coal-fire before them. A "grand passion"

at the age of ten determined the parents to send their boy to school, where the other boys would educate him. He spent four years at school at Peckham, four more with a private tutor, and then he matriculated into the University of London. During the two years of his undergraduate days he studied everything but the college curriculum—French, drawing, acting, music; and danced, fenced, boxed, and rode.

Early authorship. A writer from early childhood, influenced by his father's example and his own early love of Pope and Byron, he was eager to publish at the age of ten. The accidental discovery of Shelley's poems at a bookstall determined a new allegiance in poetry. Browning discovered himself in Shelley. When he found that this loved poet was dead the news affected him more poignantly than had the tidings of Byron's death at Missolonghi. His mother procured Shelley's poems for him, and she was persuaded to include in her purchase three volumes by John Keats. Thus the influences of the Romantic poetry of the early nineteenth century passed into Browning, to join with the new influences of the Victorian era.

First period. *Pauline* was written in the autumn of 1833, under the inspiration of Shelley's *Alastor, or the Spirit of Solitude*. It was the revelation of the awakening of the poet's soul

to the larger interests of life, love, and God. It was published anonymously, and received three reviews; one favourable by Mr. Fox in the *Monthly Repository*, one kindly by Allan Cunningham, in the *Athenæum*, and one—probably the best known—in *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, which ran, “‘Pauline; a Fragment of a Confession;’ a piece of mere bewilderment.” It was really a prophecy of poetic greatness.

When he left the University of London it was with the idea that his education should be continued by travel. He loved to say, when asked of his *alma mater*, “Italy was my University,” and to Italy he went, spending time at Asolo, the little village in the Veneto, associated with *Pippa Passes* at the beginning, and with *Asolando* at the very last of his life-work. Mrs. Bridell-Fox describes him at the time of his return to England:—“I remember him as looking in often in the evenings, having just returned from his first visit to Venice . . . He was full of enthusiasm for the Queen of Cities. He used to illustrate his glowing descriptions of its beauties, the palaces, the sunsets, the moonrises, by a most original kind of etching. Taking a bit of stray notepaper, he would hold it over a lighted candle, moving the paper about gently till it was cloudily smoked over, and then utilizing the darker smears for clouds, shadows, water, or what not, would etch with a dry pen the forms of lights on

cloud and palace, on bridge or gondola, on the vague dreamy surface he had produced."

Paracelsus, in 1835, shows how early Browning gained his power of accumulating recondite material, but still more how early he entered on his characteristic work—the study of souls. He strove to recreate the soul of the Swiss physicist and mystic in relation to nature, love, and humanity. "In his early years Browning had always a great liking for walking in the dark . . . There was, in particular, a wood near Dulwich, whither he was wont to go. There he would walk swiftly and eagerly along the solitary and lightless byways, finding a potent stimulus to imaginative thought in the happy isolation thus enjoyed" (*Sharp*). Many parts of *Paracelsus* were thus enacted.

Urged on by Macready, Browning wrote for the stage his *Strafford*, a sombre and powerful drama on the English Civil War. It was played with some success at the Covent Garden Theatre, in 1837, by Macready and Miss Faucit. Then came *Sordello* in 1840. Here Browning sought to recreate the soul of the Italian troubadour, lover, and soldier environed by the strife of Guelf and Ghibelline, of politics and wars in Italy of the thirteenth century. *Sordello* completes the first period of his literary work.

Greatest period. Then came Browning's second and greatest period, which began with a

series of poems issued under the general title of *Bells and Pomegranates*. An account of this venture is given by Mr. Gosse in his *Personalia* :—

“From the popular point of view *Sordello* was a failure, and in the face of so much poetry still unprinted, Mr. Browning could not but ruefully remember how expensive his books had been to his sympathetic and uncomplaining father . . . One day, as the poet was discussing the matter with Mr. Edward Moxon, the publisher, the latter remarked that he was bringing out some editions of the old Elizabethan dramatists in a comparatively cheap form, and that if Mr. Browning would consent to print his poems as pamphlets, using this cheap type, the expense would be very inconsiderable. The poet jumped at the idea; and it was agreed that each poem should form a separate brochure of just one sheet—sixteen pages, in double columns—the entire cost of which should not exceed twelve or fifteen pounds. In this fashion began the celebrated series of *Bells and Pomegranates*, eight numbers of which, a perfect treasury of fine poetry, came out successively between 1841 and 1846. *Pippa Passes* led the way, and was priced first at sixpence; then, the sale being inconsiderable, at a shilling, which greatly encouraged the sale; and so, slowly, up to half a crown, at which the price of each number finally rested. As the advertisement of *Bells and Pomegranates* has never been reprinted, and as that volume is not very common, I make no apology for reproducing that characteristic little document :—

“Two or three years ago I wrote a play about which the chief matter I much care to recollect at present is, that a pitful of good-natured people applauded it. Ever since, I have been desirous of doing something in the same way that should better reward their attention. What follows, I mean for the first of a series of dramatical pieces, to come out at intervals, and I amuse myself by fancying that the

cheap mode in which they appear will for once help me to a sort of pit-audience again. Of course, such a work must go on no longer than it is liked; and to provide against a certain and but too possible contingency, let me hasten to say now what, if I were sure of success, I would try to say circumstantially enough at the close, that I dedicate my best intentions most admiringly to the author of *Ion*,—most affectionately to Serjeant Talfourd."

Bells and Pomegranates had an interested reader in another new poet. In the *Poems* of 1844 of Elizabeth Barrett occurred the words—

"Or from Browning some 'Pomegranate' which if cut deep
down the middle
Shows a heart within blood-tinctured of a veined humanity."

This rare and unexpected compliment resulted in the acquaintance of Miss Barrett and Robert Browning. Their personal acquaintance began in 1846, brought about by Mr. Kenyon, her distant cousin, and a school friend of Browning's father. From this meeting resulted "the loveliest marriage of which we have record in literary history." Miss Barrett had been for years much of an invalid, and her father opposed her marriage. So on the 12th of September, 1846, Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett slipped quietly into the church of St. Marylebone and were married. They went to Italy for the winter, and for fifteen years dwelt there, with occasional visits to Paris and to England. Their chief residence was in Florence, in "Casa Guidi,"

from whose windows both poets watched with eager interest the varying fortunes of the struggle for "Italy free." There a son was born to them in 1849.

In 1855 *Men and Women* was published. Though welcomed by the discriminating, it did not receive the acclamation due the volumes containing pieces of marvellous power like *Saul*, *Andrea del Sarto*, *In a Balcony*. By 1858 Mrs. Browning's health began to fail visibly and in June, 1861, she died and was buried in Florence. When Browning went to England after this, he found, after thirty years, the beginnings of the general recognition of his eminence as a poet. In 1864 the noble volume of *Dramatis Personæ* was issued, and in 1868-9 he gave to the world, in four parts, *The Ring and the Book*, the most considerable and, in the opinion of many, the greatest work of his genius. This ended the second and greatest period of Browning's poetry.

Last period. In the last period of his life, Browning's poetic faculty became subordinated to his analytic, and the poems from 1871 to 1887 for various reasons are, with certain exceptions, of much less interest and value than the poems written between 1841 and 1869. Professor Saintsbury calls them "blank verse jaw."

In 1881, amidst the scoffs of the world, the Browning Society was instituted. The poet himself wrote of it:—

"The Browning Society, I need not say, as well as Browning himself, are fair game for criticism . . . As Wilkes was no Wilkesite, I am quite other than a Browningite . . . That there is a grotesque side to the thing is certain, but I have been surprised and touched by what could not but have been well intentioned, I think."

The last years of his life were spent as a literary lion in London and as a poet in France and Italy. In August, 1889, he was at Asolo again, the quaint hill city which had always had a fascination for him, and thence he went to Venice, to the beautiful Palazzo Rezzonico on the Grand Canal, which he said was to be "a corner for his old age." His hearing grew weaker there, and on the 12th of December, 1889, he spent the day in bed. Just before ten o'clock he asked if any news had come concerning *Asolando*, published that day. They told him of its success, and the dying poet smiled with a murmur of "How gratifying!" As the great bell of San Marco finished the stroke of ten, he passed away. His body lies side by side with Tennyson's in the Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey.

Browning's personal appearance is described by Mrs. Ritchie as "short, dark, with a frank, open countenance." Sydney Dobell describes him as "dark in hair, eyebrow, and in luxuriant beard as a Spaniard or Portuguese, which he very much resembles. A fine, large, expansible dark eye, and a mouth not exactly poetic but wonderful for its facility, arrest you at once."

II.—Robert Browning: His Work.

Difficulty of Browning. Browning is, after Milton, our most difficult poet. His difficulty lies, in the first place, in the uneven quality of his work, some of which is "poetical baggage," from which he has to be freed. In part, this difficulty is inherent in his chosen field—the problems and the experiences of the human soul. In part, it is due to his favourite and peculiar method—the dramatic monologue. Finally, it is due to his style, which disregards the reader's convenience, seeking rather to reflect exactly the subtle play of the poet's thought. Readers of Browning must, however, guard themselves against thinking that where they see no meaning Browning had none. Browning's words of his own work were,—“I never pretended to offer such literature as should be a substitute for a cigar or game at dominoes to an idle man.”

His greater poetry. His great work lies between the years 1841 and 1869. He arrived at his great poetry after he had completed many less successful poems: *Pauline*, 1833, a record of the awakening of a poet's soul,—“a fragment of a confession,” written under the inspiration of Shelley; *Paracelsus*, 1835, where Browning found his field—the interpretation of man's

inner life; *Strafford*, 1837, and *Sordello*, 1840. With *Pippa Passes*, 1841, we may say Browning fairly mastered his material, so as to mould it into clear, suggestive form. As Pippa sings—

"Day!

Faster and more fast

O'er night's brim, day boils at last."

From that on, for twenty-eight years, Browning is pure gold, radiant as day and instinct as day with vivifying power. Within these years are the dramas and dramatic poems—*Pippa Passes*, *A Blot in the 'Scutcheon*, *Colombe's Birthday*, *A Soul's Tragedy*, *In a Balcony*, and *The Ring and the Book*; and the volumes of shorter poems gathered together under the titles *Dramatic Lyrics*, *Dramatic Romances*, *Men and Women*, and *Dramatis Personæ*.

These works, ending with *The Ring and the Book* in 1869, are not all of Browning's great work. There is something significant in each subsequent volume. The day wanes with many splendors. *Pacchiarotto*, 1876, yields *Hervé Riel*; *Dramatic Idylls*, 1879, *Pheidippides*; *Jocoseria*, 1883, "*Never the time and the place*"; *Asolando*, 1889, the *Epilogue*. But, on the whole, psychological analysis ousts the poetry in the volumes subsequent to 1869.

His field. Browning's chosen field was human character, shown in the experiences of the inner life. Of *Sordello* he said: "My stress lay on the

incidents in the development of a soul; little else is worth study.' Elsewhere he wrote—

“Man's thoughts and loves and hates!
Earth is my vineyard, these grew there.”

This intellectual psychological interest makes Browning at times difficult, but on the other hand makes his work worth study. He gives up the overhandled themes of earlier poets to clear up fresh untouched phases of human experience. He tries the human soul in its good and its bad, always alert for its reach into the infinite. Browning's more particular field, as seen in his psychological monologues, was character in some moment of its intensest revelation, some inner crisis.

His method. The method that Browning chose by preference for the presentation of his material was the monologue. It is Shakspeare's method of character revelation as in Hamlet's soliloquy—

“To be or not to be: that is the question,” etc.;

but it is Shakspeare's soliloquy made self-explanatory, so that each monologue in Browning is an implicit story treated at its climax. Like the group of Laocoön and his sons, his monologue gives the highest point of interest but has in it implicit suggestions of the beginning and end of the story. To intensify the dramatic interest Browning suggests the presence of some one beside the main character, who does not speak, or whose words are given in indirect narration by

the main speaker. In beginning each poem of Browning's we must ask ourselves, Who is speaking? What is his situation? What is the crisis in his life? Who else is present? What led to the crisis? What is its solution?

His range of themes. Browning is cosmopolitan. He seeks the characters that interest him in all nations and in all times—among the Hebrews, in Spain, in France, above all in Italy.—

"Open my heart and you will see
Graved inside it: Italy."

He is cosmopolitan because he is following the human spirit in its countless avatars, its Protean shapes. In his works a vindictive Spanish monk jostles a modern sceptical bishop; Caliban's theology is put beside the longings of Andrea del Sarto; the poet sits with equal zest at the "Mermaid" with Shakspeare or at a spiritualist seance with Sludge the medium.

His message. Through his finest exemplars of human nature, Browning especially reveals his thought on the human soul. His philosophy was a sober optimism. He feels the worth of life, "the mere living"; even old age has its part in the good whole—it is "the time for the hoarded memories of the heart." Believing in life, he believed in the exercise of all our powers and feelings. His creed was

"Setting free
Body and soul the purpose to pursue
God traced for both."

And he shows, in poem after poem, how convention, indecision, cowardice, and the low success of fame or riches can rob the soul of its finest possibilities. He renders with equal certainty of their rightness the aspiring soul of lover, musician, painter, student, scientist, prophet. Out of struggle and aspiration comes fruition—not necessarily realized here on earth, but elsewhere. In life here, love is the essential stimulus and reward. Out of nature, he saw God's omnipotence, out of man's finite love he discerned God's infinite love. He "believed in soul and was very sure of God." But his optimism was a sober optimism; he recognized the evil of the world. Yet he believed in the transforming power of good.

"What began best can't end worst,
Nor what God blessed once, prove accurst."

In that sober sense he could say with Pippa:

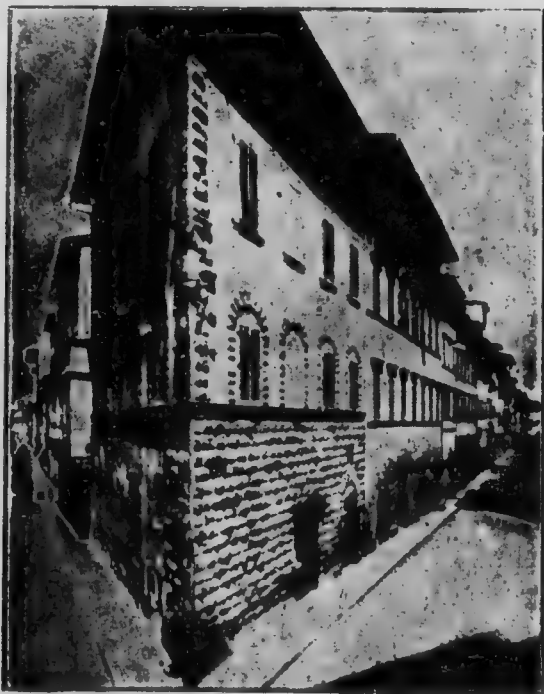
"God's in his heaven, all's right with the world."

Tennyson and Browning. Tennyson is our *Andrea del Sarto*, our "faultless artist." Browning is rather one of those greater imperfect artists in whose "vext, beating, stopt-up brain there burnt a truer light of God." Tennyson's poetry is like a fair Grecian temple on a pleasant hillside, in marble beauty finished and nobly perfect. Browning's poetry is rather the Gothic cathedral set in some thronging city. Within, sculptor,

artist, musician speak to us from niche and wall
and organ; life is symbolized in the streaming
sunlight, the grotesque carvings, the darknesse
in which arch and vaulting disappear; above,
stretching up in passionate aspiration, is the
spire, symbol of the soul that must strive though
it cannot reach—

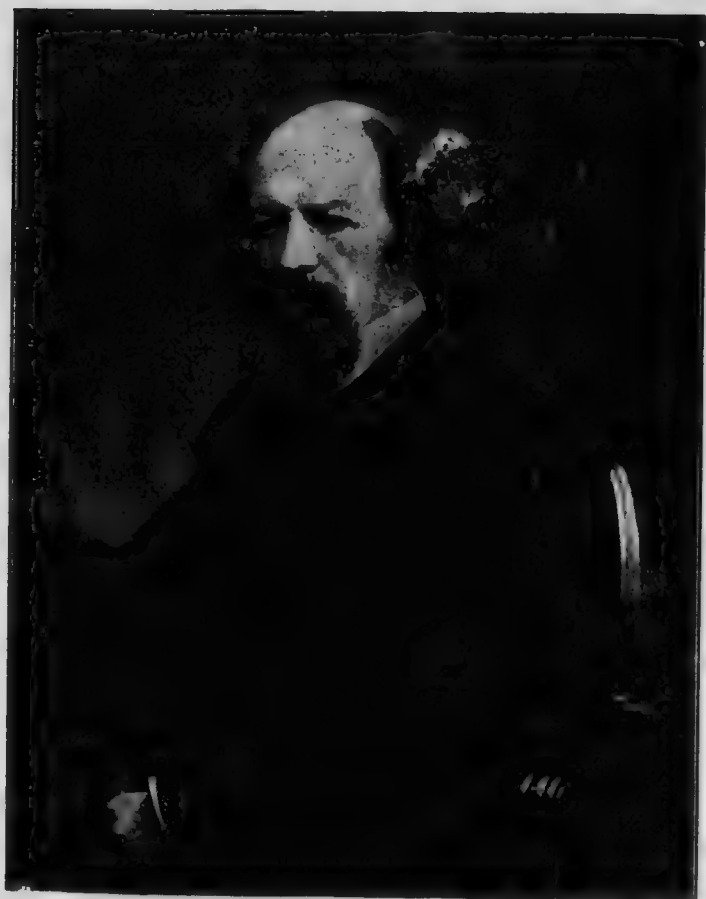
"The high that proved too high, the heroic for earth
too hard,

The passion that left the ground to lose itself in the sky,
Are music sent up to God by the lover and the bard;
Enough that he heard it once; we shall hear it by and by."



CASA GUIDI.

POEMS
OF
ALFRED TENNYSON



ALFRED TENNYSON, 1809-1892.



"Farringford," Tennyson's home, Freshwater, I.W.

TENNYSON.

THE POET.

THE poet in a golden clime was born,
 With golden stars above;
Dower'd with the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn,
 The love of love.

He saw thro' life and death, thro' good and ill, 5
 He saw thro' his own soul.
The marvel of the everlasting will,
 An open scroll,

Before him lay: with echoing feet he threaded
 The secretest walks of fame: 10
The viewless arrows of his thoughts were headed
 And wing'd with flame,

Like Indian reeds blown from his silver tongue,
And of so fierce a flight,
From Calpe unto Caucasus they sung, 15
Filling with light

And vagrant melodies the winds which bore
Them earthward till they lit;
Then, like the arrow-seeds of the field flower,
The fruitful wit 20

Cleaving, took root, and springing forth anew
Where'er they fell, behold,
Like to the mother plant in semblance, grew
A flower all gold,

And bravely furnish'd all abroad to fling 25
The winged shafts of truth,
To throng with stately blooms the breathing spring
Of Hope and Youth.

So many minds did gird their orbs with beams,
Tho' one did fling the fire. 30
Heaven flow'd upon the soul in many dreams
Of high desire.

Thus truth was multiplied on truth, the world
Like one great garden show'd,
And thro' the wreaths of floating dark upcurl'd, 35
Rare sunrise flow'd

And Freedom rear'd in that august sunrise
 Her beautiful bold brow,
 When rites and forms before his burning eyes
 Melted like snow.

40

There was no blood upon her maiden robes
 Sunn'd by those orient skies;
 But round about the circles of the globes
 Of her keen eyes

And in her raiment's hem was traced in flame
 WISDOM, a name to shake
 Ail evil dreams of power—a sacred name.
 And when she spake,

45

Her words did gather thunder as they ran,
 And as the lightning to the thunder
 Which follows it, riving the spirit of man,
 Making earth wonder,

50

So was their meaning to her words. No sword
 Of wrath her right arm whirl'd,
 But one poor poet's scroll, and with *his* word
 She shook the world.

55

O hark, O hear! how thin & clear
 And thinner, clearer farther going
 O sweet & far from cliff & scar
 The horns of Elfland faintly blowing
 Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying
 Blow, bugle; answer echoes dying, dying, dying

THE LADY OF SHALOTT.

PART I.

On either side the river lie
 Long fields of barley and of rye,
 That clothe the wold and meet the sky;
 And thro' the field the road runs by
 To many-tower'd Camelot; 5
 And up and down the people go,
 Gazing where the lilies blow
 Round an island there below,
 The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver, 10
 Little breezes dusk and shiver
 Thro' the wave that runs for ever
 By the island in the river
 Flowing down to Camelot.

Four gray walls, and four gray towers, 15
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle imbowers
 The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veil'd,
Slide the heavy barges trail'd 20
By slow horses; and unhail'd
The shallop flitteth silken-sail'd
 Skimming down to Camelot:
But who hath seen her wave her hand?
Or at the casement seen her stand? 25
Or is she known in all the land,
 The Lady of Shalott?

Only reapers, reaping early
In among the bearded barley,
Hear a song that echoes cheerly 30
From the river winding clearly,
 Down to tower'd Camelot:
And by the moon the reaper weary,
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
Listening, whispers 'Tis the fairy 35
 Lady of Shalott.'

PART II.

THERE she weaves by night and day
A magic web with colours gay.
She has heard a whisper say,
A curse is on her if she stay 40
 To look down to Camelot.

She knows not what the curse may be,
And so she weaveth steadily,
And little other care hath she,
The Lady of Shalott.

45

And moving thro' a mirror clear
That hangs before her all the year,
Shadows of the world appear.
There she sees the highway near
Winding down to Camelot:
There the river eddy whirls,
And there the surly village-churls,
And the red cloaks of market girls,
Pass onward from Shalott.

50

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
An abbot on an ambling pad,
Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,
Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,
Goes by to tower'd Camelot;
And sometimes thro' the mirror blue
The knights come riding two and two:
She hath no loyal knight and true,
The Lady of Shalott.

55

60

But in her web she still delights
To weave the mirror's magic sights,
For often thro' the silent nights
A funeral, with plumes and lights
And music, went to Camelot:

65

THE LADY OF SHALOTT.

50

Or when the moon was overhead,
Came two young lovers lately wed ; 70
'I am half sick of shadows,' said
The Lady of Shalott.

PART III.

A BOW-SHOT from her bower-eaves,
He rode between the barley-sheaves,
The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves, 75
And flamed upon the brazen greaves
Of bold Sir Lancelot.

A red-cross knight for ever kneel'd
To a lady in his shield,
That sparkled on the yellow field, 80
Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,
Like to some branch of stars we see
Hung in the golden Galaxy.
The bridle bells rang merrily 85

As he rode down to Camelot:
And from his blazon'd baldric slung
A mighty silver bugle hung,
And as he rode his armour rung,
Beside remote Shalott. 90

All in the blue unclouded weather
Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather
The helmet and the helmet-feather
Burn'd like one burning flame together,
As he rode down to Camelot. 95

As often thro' the purple night,
 Below the starry clusters bright,
 Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
 Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glow'd; 100
 On burnish'd hooves his war-horse trode;
 From underneath his helmet flow'd
 His coal-black curls as on he rode,
 As he rode down to Camelot.

From the bank and from the river 105
 He flash'd into the crystal mirror,
 'Tirra lirra,' by the river
 Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,
 She made three paces thro' the room, 110
 She saw the water-lily bloom,
 She saw the helmet and the plume,
 She look'd down to Camelot.

Out flew the web and floated wide;
 The mirror crack'd from side to side; 115
 'The curse is come upon me,' cried
 The Lady of Shalott.

PART IV.

In the stormy east-wind straining,
 The pale yellow woods were waning,
 The broad stream in his banks complaining, 120
 Heavily the low sky raining
 Over tower'd Camelot;

Down she came and found a boat
 Beneath a willow left afloat,
 And round about the prow she wrote 125
The Lady of Shalott.

And down the river's dim expanse
 Like some bold seer in a trance,
 Seeing all his own mischance—
 With a glassy countenance 130
 Did she look to Camelot.
 And at the closing of the day
 She loosed the chain, and down she lay;
 The broad stream bore her far away,
 The Lady of Shalott. 135

Lying, robed in snowy white
 That loosely flew to left and right—
 The leaves upon her falling light—
 Thro' the noises of the night
 She floated down to Camelot: 140
 And as the boat-head wound along
 The willowy hills and fields among,
 They heard her singing her last song,
 The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy, 145
 Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
 Till her blood was frozen slowly,
 And her eyes were darken'd wholly,
 Turn'd to tower'd Camelot.

For ere she reach'd upon the tide 150
The first house by the water-side,
Singing in her song she died,
The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
By garden-wall and gallery, 155
A gleaming shape she floated by,
Dead-pale between the houses high,
Silent into Camelot.

Out upon the wharfs they came,
Knight and burgher, lord and dame, 160
And round the prow they read her name,
The Lady of Shalott.

Who is this? and what is here?
And in the lighted palace near
Died the sound of royal cheer; 165
And they cross'd themselves for fear;
All the knights at Camelot:
But Lancelot mused a little space;
He said, 'She has a lovely face;
God in his mercy lend her grace 170
The Lady of Shalott:

ÆNONE.

THERE lies a vale in *Ida*, lovelier
 Than all the valleys of *Ionian* hills.
 The swimming vapour slopes athwart the glen,
 Puts forth an arm, and creeps from pine to pine,
 And loiters, slowly drawn. On either hand 5
 The lawns and meadow-ledges midway down
 Hang rich in flowers, and far below them roars
 The long brook falling thro' the clov'n ravine
 In cataract after cataract to the sea.
 Behind the valley topmost *Gargarus* 10
 Stands up and takes the morning: but in front
 The gorges, opening wide apart, reveal
Troas and *Ilion's* column'd citadel,
 The crown of *Troas*

Hither came at noon
 Mournful *Ænone*, wandering forlorn 15
 Of *Paris*, once her playmate on the hills.
 Her cheek had lost the rose, and round her neck
 Floated her hair or seem'd to float in rest.
 She, leaning on a fragment twined with vine,
 Sang to the stillness, till the mountain-shade
 Crept downward to her seat from the upper cliff

O mother *Ida*, many-fountain'd *Ida*,
 Dear mother *Ida*, harken ere I die.
 For now the noonday quiet holds the hill:
 The grasshopper is silent in the grass: 25
 The lizard, with his shadow on the stone,

Rests like a shadow, and the winds are dead.
The purple flower droops: the golden bee
Is lily-cradled: I alone awake.

My eyes are full of tears, my heart of love, 30
My heart is breaking, and my eyes are dim,
And I am all aweary of my life.

‘O mother Ida, many-fountain’d Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Hear me, O Earth, hear me, O Hills, O Caves 35
That house the cold crown’d snake! O mountain
brooks,

I am the daughter of a River-God,
Hear me, for I will speak, and build up all
My sorrow with my song, as yonder walls,
Rose slowly to a music slowly breathed, 40
A cloud that gather’d shape: for it may be
That, while I speak of it, a little while
My heart may wander from its deeper woe.

‘O mother Ida, many-fountain’d Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die. 45
I waited underneath the dawning hills,
Aloft the mountain lawn was dewy-dark,
And dewy-dark aloft the mountain pine:
Beautiful Paris, evil-hearted Paris,
Leading a jet-black goat white-horn’d, white-hooved, 50
Came up from reedy Simois all alone.

‘O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Far-off the torrent call’d me from the cleft:

Far up the solitary morning smote
 The streaks of virgin snow. With down-dropt eyes 55
 I sat alone: white-breasted like a star
 Fronting the dawn he moved: a leopard skin
 Dropped from his shoulder, but his sunny hair
 Cluster'd about his temples like a God's:
 And his cheek brighten'd as the foam-bow brightens 60
 When the wind blows the foam, and all my heart
 Went forth to embrace him coming ere he came.

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 He smiled, and opening out his milk-white palm
 Disclosed a fruit of pure Hesperian gold, 65
 That smelt ambrosially, and while I look'd
 And listen'd, the full-flowing river of speech
 Came down upon my heart.

"My own Ænone,
 Beautiful-brow'd Ænone, my own soul,
 Behold this fruit, whose gleaming rind ingrav'n 70
 'For the most fair,' would seem to award it thine,
 As lovelier than whatever Oread haunt
 The knolls of Ida, loveliest in all grace
 Of movement, and the charm of married brows."

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die. 75
 He prest the blossom of his lips to mine,
 And added "This was cast upon the board,
 When all the full-faced presence of the Gods
 Ranged in the halls of Peleus; whereupon
 Rose feud, with question unto whom 'twere due: 80

Put light-foot Iris brought it yester-eve,
 Delivering, that to me, by common voice
 Elected umpire, Herè comes to-day,
 Pallas and Aphrodité, claiming each
 This meed of fairest. Thou, within the cave 85
 Behind yon whispering tuft of oldest pine,
 Mayst well behold them unbeheld, unheard
 Hear all, and see thy Paris judge of Gods."

' Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 It was the deep midnight : one silvery cloud 90
 Had lost his way between the piney sides
 Of this long glen. Then to the bower they came,
 Naked they came to that smooth-swarded bower,
 And at their feet the crocus brake like fire,
 Violet, amaracus, and asphodel, 95
 Lotos and lilies : and a wind arose,
 And overhead the wandering ivy and vine,
 This way and that, in many a wild festoon
 Ran riot, garlanding the gnarled boughs
 With bunch and berry and flower thro' and thro'. 100

' O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 On the tree-tops a crested peacock lit,
 And o'er him flow'd a golden cloud, and lean'd
 Upon him, slowly dropping fragrant dew.
 Then first I heard the voice of her, to whom 105
 Coming thro' Heaven, like a light that grows
 Larger and clearer, with one mind the Gods
 Rise up for reverence. She to Paris made

Proffer of royal power, ample rule
 Unquestion'd, overflowing revenue 110
 Wherewith to embellish state, "from many a vale
 And river-sunder'd champaign clothed with corn,
 Or labour'd mine undrainable of ore.
 Honour," she said, "and homage, tax and toll,
 From many an inland town and haven large, 115
 Mast-throng'd beneath her shadowing citadel
 In glassy bays among her tallest towers."

'O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 Still she spake on and still she spake of power,
 "Which in all action is the end of all ; 120
 Power fitted to the season ; wisdom-bred
 And throned of wisdom—from all neighbour crowns
 Alliance and allegiance, till thy hand
 Fail from the sceptre-staff. Such boon from me,
 From me, Heaven's Queen, Paris, to thee king-born, 125
 A shepherd all thy life but yet king-born,
 Should come most welcome, seeing men, in power
 Only, are likest gods, who have attain'd
 Rest in a happy place and quiet seats
 Above the thunder, with undying bliss 130
 In knowledge of their own supremacy."

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 She ceased, and Paris held the costly fruit
 Out at arm's-length, so much the thought of power
 Flatter'd his spirit ; but Pallas where she stood 135
 Somewhat apart, her clear and bared limbs

O'erthwarted with the brazen-headed spear
 Upon her pearly shoulder leaning cold,
 The while, above, her full and earnest eye
 Over her snow-cold breast and angry cheek 140
 Kept watch, waiting decision, made reply.

' "Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,
 These three alone lead life to sovereign power.
 Yet not for power (power of herself
 Would come uncall'd for) but to live by law, 145
 Acting the law we live by without fear ;
 And, because right is right, to follow right
 Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence."

' Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 Again she said : " I woo thee not with gifts. 150
 Sequel of guerdon could not alter me
 To fairer. Judge thou me by what I am,
 So shalt thou find me fairest.

Yet, indeed,
 If gazing on divinity disrobed
 Thy mortal eyes are frail to judge of fair, 155
 Unbias'd by self-profit, oh ! rest thee sure
 That I shall love thee well and cleave to thee,
 So that my vigour, wedded to thy blood,
 Shall strike within thy pulses, like a God's,
 To push thee forward thro' a life of shocks, 160
 Dangers, and deeds, until endurance grow
 Sinew'd with action, and the full-grown will,
 Circled thro' all experiences, pure law,
 Commensure perfect freedom."

‘ Here she ceas’d,
And Paris ponder’d, and I cried, “ O Paris, 165
Give it to Pallas ! ” but he heard me not,
Or hearing would not hear me, woe is me !

‘ O mother Ida, many-fountain’d Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Idalian Aphroditè beautiful, 170
Fresh as the foam, new-bathed in Paphian wells,
With rosy slender fingers backward drew
From her warm brows and bosom her deep hair
Ambrosial, golden round her lucid throat
And shoulder : from the violets her light foot 175
Shone rosy-white, and o’er her rounded form
Between the shadows of the vine-bunches
Floated the glowing sunlights, as she moved.

‘ Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
She with a subtle smile in her mild eyes, 180
The herald of her triumph, drawing nigh
Half-whisper’d in his ear, “ I promise thee
The fairest and most loving wife in Greece,”
She spoke and laugh’d : I shut my sight for fear :
But when I look’d, Paris had raised his arm, 185
And I beheld great Herè’s angry eyes,
As she withdrew into the golden cloud,
And I was left alone within the bower ;
And from that time to this I am alone,
And I shall be alone until I die. 190

‘ Yet, mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Fairest—why fairest wife ? am I not fair ?

My love hath told me so a thousand times.
 Methinks I must be fair, for yesterday,
 When I past by, a wild and wanton pard, 195
 Eyed like the evening star, with playful tail
 Crouch'd fawning in the weed. Most loving is she?
 Ah me, my mountain shepherd, that my arms
 Were wound about thee, and my hot lips prest
 Close, close to thine in that quick-falling dew 200
 Of fruitful kisses, thick as Autumn rains
 Flash in the pools of whirling Simois.

'O mother, hear me yet before I die.
 They came, they cut away my tallest pines,
 My tall dark pines, that plumed the craggy ledge 205
 High over the blue gorge, and all between
 The snowy peak and snow-white cataract
 Foster'd the callow eaglet—from beneath
 Whose thick mysterious boughs in the dark morn
 The panther's roar came muffled, while I sat 210
 Low in the valley. Never, never more
 Shall lone CEnone see the morning mist
 Sweep thro' them ; never see them overlaid
 With narrow moon-lit slips of silver cloud,
 Between the loud stream and the trembling stars. 215

'O mother, hear me yet before I die.
 I wish that somewhere in the ruin'd folds,
 Among the fragments tumbled from the glens,
 Or the dry thickets, I could meet with her
 The Abominable, that uninvited came 220
 Into the fair Peleïan banquet-hall,

And cast the golden fruit upon the board,
And bred this change ; that I might speak my mind,
And tell her to her face how much I hate
Her presence, hated both of Gods and men. 225

‘O mother, hear me yet before I die.
Hath he not sworn his love a thousand times,
In this green valley, under this green hill,
Ev’n on this hand, and sitting on this stone ?
Seal’d it with kisses : water’d it with tears ? 230
O happy tears, and how unlike to these !
O happy Heaven, how canst thou see my face ?
O happy earth, how canst thou bear my weight ?
O death, death, death, thou ever-floating cloud,
There are enough unhappy on this earth, 235
Pass by the happy souls, that love to live :
I pray thee, pass before my light of life,
And shadow all my soul, that I may die.
Thou weighest heavy on the heart within,
Weigh heavy on my eyelids : let me die. 240

‘O mother, hear me yet before I die.
I will not die alone, for fiery thoughts
Do shape themselves within me, more and more,
Whereof I catch the issue, as I hear
Dead sounds at night come from the inmost hills, 245
Like footsteps upon wool. I dimly see
My far-off doubtful purpose, as a mother
Conjectures of the features of her child
Ere it is born : her child ! a shudder comes
Across me : never child be born of me, 250
Unblest, to vex me with his father’s eyes !

'O mother, hear me yet before I die.
 Hear me, O earth. I will not die alone,
 Lest their shrill happy laughter come to me
 Walking the cold and starless road of Death
 Uncomforted, leaving my ancient love
 With the Greek woman. I will rise and go
 Down into Troy, and ere the stars come forth
 Talk with the wild Cassandra, for she says
 A fire dances before her, and a sound
 Rings ever in her ears of armed men.
 What this may be I know not, but I know
 That, wheresoe'er I am by night and day,
 All earth and air seem only burning fire.

245

260

 ST. AGNES' EVE.

DEEP on the convent-roof the snows
 Are sparkling to the moon:
 My breath to heaven like vapour goes:
 May my soul follow soon!
 The shadows of the convent-towers
 Slant down the snowy sward,
 Still creeping with the creeping hours
 That lead me to my Lord:
 Make Thou my spirit pure and clear
 As are the frosty skies,
 Or this first snowdrop of the year
 That in my bosom lies.

5

10

As these white robes are soiled and dark,
To yonder shining ground;
As this pale taper's earthly spark, 15
To yonder argent round;
So shows my soul before the Lamb,
My spirit before Thee;
So in mine earthly house I am,
To that I hope to be. 20
Break up the heavens, O Lord! and far,
Thro' all yon starlight keen,
Draw me, thy bride, a glittering star,
In raiment white and clean.

He lifts me to the golden doors; 25
The flashes come and go;
All heaven bursts her starry floors,
And strows her lights below,
And deepens on and up! the gates
Roll back, and far within 30
For me the Heavenly Bridegroom waits,
To make me pure of sin.
The sabbaths of Eternity,
One sabbath deep and wide—
A light upon the shining sea— 35
The Bridegroom with his bride!

THE EPIC.

At Francis Allen's on the Christmas-eve,
 The game of forfeits done—the girls all kiss'd
 Beneath the sacred bush and past away—
 The parson Holmes, the poet Everard Hall,
 The host, and I sat round the wassail-bowl, 5
 Then half-way ebb'd : and there we held a talk,
 How all the old honour had from Christmas gone,
 Or gone, or dwindled down to some odd games
 In some odd nooks like this ; till I, tired out
 With cutting eights that day upon the pond, 10
 Where, three times slipping from the outer edge,
 I bump'd the ice into three several stars,
 Fell in a doze ; and half-awake I heard
 The parson taking wide and wider sweeps,
 Now harping on the church-commissioners, 15
 Now hawking at Geology and schism ;
 Until I woke, and found him settled down
 Upon the general decay of faith
 Right thro' the world, 'at home was little left,
 And none abroad : there was no anchor, none, 20
 To hold by.' Francis, laughing, clapt his hand
 On Everard's shoulder with 'I hold by him.'
 'And I,' quoth Everard, 'by the wassail-bowl.'
 'Why yes,' I said, 'we knew your gift that way
 At college : but another which you had, 25
 I mean of verse (for so we held it then),
 What came of that ?' 'You know,' said Frank,
 'he burnt

His epic, his King Arthur, some twelve books'—
 And then to me demanding why? 'Oh, sir,
 He thought that nothing new was said, or else 30
 Something so said 'twas nothing—that a truth
 Looks freshest in the fashion of the day:
 God knows: he has a mint of reasons: ask.
 It pleased *me* well enough.' 'Nay, nay,' said Hall,
 'Why take the style of those heroic times? 35
 For nature brings not back the Mastodon,
 Nor we those times; and why should any man
 Remodel models? these twelve books of mine
 Were faint Homeric echoes, nothing-worth,
 Mere chaff and draff, much better burnt.' 'But I,' 40
 Said Francis, 'pick'd the eleventh from this hearth
 And have it: keep a thing, its use will come.
 I hoard it as a sugar-plum for Holmes.'
 He laugh'd, and I, tho' sleepy, like a horse
 That hears the corn-bin open, prick'd my ears; 45
 For I remember'd Everard's college fame
 When we were Freshmen: then at my request
 He brought it; and the poet little urged,
 But with some prelude of disparagement,
 Read, mouthing out his hollow oes and aes 50
 Deep-chested music, and to this result.

MORTE D'ARTHUR.

So all day long the noise of battle roll'd
 Among the mountains by the winter sea;
 Until King Arthur's table, man by man,

Had fallen in Lyonesse about their Lord, 55
King Arthur : then, because his wound was deep,
The bold Sir Bevidere uplifted him,
Sir Bedivere, the last of all his knights,
And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,
A broken chancel with a broken cross, 60
That stood on a dark strait of barren land.
On one side lay the Ocean, and on one
Lay a great water, and the moon was full.
Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere :
'The sequel of to-day unsolders all 65
The goodliest fellowship of famous knights
Whereof this world holds record. Such a sleep
They sleep—the men I loved. I think that we
Shall never more, at any future time,
Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds, 70
Walking about the gardens and the halls
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.
I perish by this people which I made,—
Tho' Merlin swore that I should come again
To rule once more—but let what will be, be, 75
I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm
That without help I cannot last till morn.
Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,
Which was my pride : for thou rememberest how
In those old days, one summer noon, an arm 80
Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
Holding the sword—and how I row'd across
And took it, and have worn it, like a king :

And, wheresoever I am sung or told 85
 In aftertime, this also shall be known.
 But now delay not : take Excalibur,
 And fling him far into the middle mere :
 Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring me word.'

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere : 90
 'It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus,
 Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the helm.
 A little thing may harm a wounded man.
 Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,
 Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee word.' 95

So saying, from the ruin'd shrine he stept
 And in the moon athwart the place of tomb,
 Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,
 Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang
 Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, stepping down 100
 By zig-zag paths, and juts of pointed rock,
 Came on the shining levels of the lake.

There drew he forth the brand Excalibur,
 And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,
 Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran forth 105
 And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt :
 For all the haft twinkled with diamond sparks,
 Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work
 Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so long
 That both his eyes were dazzled, as he stood, 110
 This way and that dividing the swift mind,
 In act to throw : but at last it seem'd
 Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd
 There in the many-knotted waterflags,

That whistled stiff and dry about the marge. 115
 So strode he back slow to the wounded King.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere :
 'Hast thou perform'd my mission which I gave ?
 What is it thou hast seen ? or what hast heard ?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere : 120
 'I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,
 And the wild water lapping on the crag.'

To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale :
 'Thou hast betray'd thy nature and thy name,
 Not rendering true answer, as beseem'd 125
 Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight :
 For surer sign had follow'd, either hand,
 Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.
 This is a shameful thing for men to lie.
 Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again 130
 As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing
 I bad thee, watch, and lightly bring me word.'

Then went Sir Bedivere the second time
 Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,
 Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in thought ; 135
 But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,
 How curiously and strangely chased, he smote
 His palms together, and he cried aloud,

'And if indeed I cast the brand away,
 Surely a precious thing, one worthy note, 140
 Should thus be lost for ever from the earth,
 Which might have pleased the eyes of many men.
 What good should follow this, if this were done ?
 What harm, undone ? deep harm to disobey,

Seeing obedience is the bond of rule. 145
 Were it well to obey then, if a king demand
 An act unprofitable, against himself ?
 The King is sick, and knows not what he does.
 What record, or what relic of my lord
 Should be to aftertime, but empty breath 150
 And rumours of a doubt ? but were this kept,
 Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,
 Some one might show it at a joust of arms,
 Saying, " King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,
 Wrought by the lonely maiden of the Lake. 155
 Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps
 Upon the hidden bases of the hills."
 So might some old man speak in the aftertime
 To all the people, winning reverence.
 But now much honour and much fame were lost.' 160
 So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,
 And hid Excalibur the second time,
 And so strode back slow to the wounded King.
 Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heavily :
 ' What is it thou hast seen ? or what hast heard ? ' 165
 And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :
 ' I heard the water lapping on the crag
 And the long ripple washing in the reeds.'
 To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath :
 ' Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue, 170
 Unknightly, traitor-hearted ! Woe is me !
 Authority forgets a dying king,
 Laid widow'd of the power in his eye
 That bow'd the will. I see thee what thou art,

For thou, the latest-left of all my knights, 175
 In whom should meet the offices of all,
 Thou wouldst betray me for the precious hilt ;
 Either from lust of gold, or like a girl
 Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.
 Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice, 180
 And the third time may prosper, get thee hence :
 But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,
 I will arise and slay thee with my hands.'

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,
 And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged 185
 Among the bulrush-beds, and clutch'd the sword,
 And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The great brand
 Made lightnings in the splendour of the moon,
 And flashing round and round, and whirl'd in an
 arch,

Shot like a streamer of the northern morn, 190
 Seen where the moving isles of winter shock
 By night, with noises of the northern sea.
 So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur :
 But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm
 Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful, 195
 And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him
 Three times, and drew him under in the mere.
 And lightly went the other to the King.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker breath :
 'Now see I by thine eyes that this is done, 200
 Speak out : what is it thou hast heard, or seen ?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :
 'Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems

Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die, 205
Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men,
So great a miracle as yonder hilt.

Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling him ;
But when I looked again, behold an arm,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful, 210
That caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere.'

And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard :
' My end draws nigh ; 'tis time that I were gone.
Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight, 215
And bear me to the margin ; yet I fear
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die.'

So saying, from the pavement he half rose,
Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,
And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes 220
As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere
Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,
And would have spoken, but he found not words,
Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,
O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands, 225
And rising bore him thro' the place of tombs.

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur panted hard,
Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed
When all the house is mute. So sigh'd the King,
Muttering and murmuring at his ear, 'Quick, quick ! 230
I fear it is too late, and I shall die.'

But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,
Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he walk'd,

Larger than human on the frozen hills.
 He heard the deep behind him, and a cry 235
 Before. His own thought drove him, like a goad.
 Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves
 And barren chasms, and all to left and right
 The bare black cliff clang'd round him, as he based
 His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang 240
 Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels—
 And on a sudden, lo ! the level lake,
 And the long glories of the winter moon.

Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge,
 Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern, 245
 Beneath them ; and descending they were ware
 That all the decks were dense with stately forms
 Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream—by these
 Three Queens with crowns of gold—and from them
 rose

A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars, 250
 And, as it were one voice an agony
 Of lamentation, like a wind, that shrills
 All night in a waste land, where no one comes,
 Or hath come, since the making of the world.

Then murmur'd Arthur, ' Place me in the barge,' 255
 And to the barge they came. There those three
 Queens

Put forth their hands, and took the King, and wept.
 But she, that rose the tallest of them all
 And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,
 And loosed the shatter'd casque, and chafed his
 hands, 260

And call'd him by his name, complaining loud,
 And dropping bitter tears against his brow
 Striped with dark blood : for all his face was white
 And colourless, and like the wither'd moon
 Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east ; 265
 And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd with drops
 Of onset ; and the light and lustrous curls—
 That made his forehead like a rising sun
 High from the dais-throne—were parched with dust ;
 Or, clotted into points and hanging loose, 270
 Mix'd with the knightly growth that fringed his
 lips.

So, like a shatter'd column lay the King ;
 Not like that Arthur who, with lance in rest,
 From spur to plume a star of tournament,
 Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and charged 275
 Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere,
 ' Ah, my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go ?
 Where shall I hide my forehead and my eyes ?
 For now I see the true old times are dead, 280
 When every morning brought a noble chance,
 And every chance brought out a noble knight.
 Such times have been not since the light that led
 The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.
 But now the whole ROUND TABLE is dissolved 285
 Which was an image of the mighty world ;
 And I, the last, go forth companionless,
 And the days darken round me, and the years,
 Among new men, strange faces, other minds.'

And slowly answered Arthur from the barge : 290
 ' The older order changeth, yielding place to new,
 And God fulfils Himself in many ways,
 Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.
 Comfort thyself : what comfort is in me ?
 I have lived my life, and that which I have done 295
 May He within Himself make pure ! but thou,
 If thou shouldst never see my face again,
 Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by
 prayer
 Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice
 Rise like a fountain for me night and day. 300
 For what are men better than sheep or goats
 That nourish a blind life within the brain,
 If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
 Both for themselves and those who call them friend ?
 For so the whole round earth is every way 305
 Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.
 But now farewell. I am going a long way
 With these thou seest—if indeed I go—
 (For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)
 To the island-valley of Avilion ; 310
 Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
 Nor ever wind blows loudly ; but it lies
 Deep-meadow'd, happy fair with orchard-lawns
 And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea,
 Where I will heal me of my grievous wound.' 315
 So said he, and the barge with oar and sail
 Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan
 That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,

Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood
 With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere 320
 Revolving many memories, till the hull
 Look'd one black dot against the verge of dawn,
 And on the mere the wailing died away.

HERE ended Hall, and our last light, that long
 Had wink'd and threaten'd darkness, flared and
 fell: 325

At which the Parson, sent to sleep with sound,
 And waked with silence, grunted 'Good!' but we
 Sat rapt: it was the tone with which he read—
 Perhaps some modern touches here and there
 Redeem'd it from the charge of nothingness— 330
 Or else we loved the man, and prized his work;
 I know not: but we sitting, as I said,
 The cock crew loud; as at that time of year
 The lusty bird takes every hour for dawn:
 Then Francis, muttering, like a man ill-used, 335
 'There now—that's nothing!' drew a little back,
 And drove his heel into the smoulder'd log,
 That sent a blast of sparkles up the flue:
 And so to bed; where yet in sleep I seem'd
 To sail with Arthur under looming shores, 340
 Point after point: till on to dawn, when dreams
 Begin to feel the truth and stir of day,
 To me, methought, who waited with a crowd,
 There came a bark that, blowing forward, bore
 King Arthur, like a modern gentleman

Of stateliest port; and all the people cried,
 'Arthur is come again: he cannot die.'
 Then those that stood upon the hills behind
 Repeated—'Come again, and thrice as fair;'
 And, further inland, voices echo'd—'Come
 With all good things, and war shall be no more.'
 At this a hundred bells began to peal,
 That with the sound I woke, and heard indeed
 The clear church-bells ring in the Christmas-morn.

350

BREAK, BREAK, BREAK.

BREAK, break, break,
 On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!
 And I would that my tongue could utter
 The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,
 That he shouts with his sister at play!
 O well for the sailor lad,
 That he sings in his boat on the bay!

6

And the stately ships go on
 To their haven under the hill;
 But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,
 And the sound of a voice that is still!

10

Break, break, break,
 At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!
 But the tender grace of a day that is dead
 Will never come back to me.

15

THE VOYAGE.

WE left behind the painted buoy
That tosses at the harbour-mouth ;
And madly danced our hearts with joy,
As fast we fled to the South :
How fresh was every sight and sound 8
On open main or winding shore !
We knew the merry world was round,
And we might sail for evermore.

Warm broke the breeze against the brow,
Dry sang the tackle, sang the sail : 10
The Lady's-head upon the prow
Caught the shrill salt, and sheer'd the gale.
The broad seas swell'd to meet the keel,
And swept behind ; so quick the run,
We felt the good ship shake and reel, 15
We seem'd to sail into the Sun !

How oft we saw the Sun retire,
And burn the threshold of the night,
Fall from his Ocean-lane of fire,
And sleep beneath his pillar'd light ! 20
How oft the purple-skirted robe
Of twilight slowly downward drawn,
As thro' the slumber of the globe
Again we dash'd into the dawn !

New stars all night above the brim 25
Of waters lighten'd into view ;

They climb'd as quickly, for the rim
 Changed every moment as we flew.
 Far ran the naked moon across
 The houseless ocean's heaving field, 30
 Or flying shone, the silver boss
 Of her own halo's dusky shield ;
 The peaky islet shifted shapes,
 High towns on hills were dimly seen,
 We past long lines of Northern capes 35
 And dewy Northern meadows green.
 We came to warmer waves, and deep
 Across the boundless east we drove,
 Where those long swells of breaker sweep
 The nutmeg rocks and isles of clove. 40
 By peaks that flamed, or, all in shade,
 Gloom'd the low coast and quivering brine
 With ashy rains, that spreading made
 Fantastic plume or sable pine ;
 By sands and steaming flats, and floods 45
 Of mighty mouth, we scudded fast,
 And hills and scarlet-mingled woods
 Glow'd for a moment as we past.
 O hundred shores of happy climes,
 How swiftly stream'd ye by the bark ! 50
 At times the whole sea burn'd, at times
 With wakes of fire we tore the dark ;
 At times a carven craft would shoot
 From havens hid in fairy bowers,
 With naked limbs and flowers and fruit, 55
 But we nor paused for fruit nor flowers.

For one fair Vision ever fled

Down the waste waters day and night,
And still we follow'd where she led,
In hope to gain upon her flight.

60

Her face was evermore unseen,
And fixt upon the far sea-line ;
But each man murmur'd, ' O my Queen,
I follow till I make thee mine.'

And now we lost her, now she gleam'd

65

Like Fancy made of golden air,
Now nearer to the prow she seem'd
Like Virtue firm, like Knowledge fair,
Now high on waves that idly burst

Like Heavenly Hope she crown'd the sea, 70
And now, the bloodless point reversed,
She bore the blade of Liberty.

And only one among us—him

We pleased not—he was seldom pleased :
He saw not far : his eyes were dim :

75

But ours he swore were all diseased.
' A ship of fools,' he shriek'd in spite,
' A ship of fools,' he sneer'd and wept.

And overboard one stormy night
He cast his body, and on we swept.

80

And never sail of ours was furl'd,
Nor anchor dropt at eve or morn ;
We lov'd the glories of the world,
But laws of nature were our scorn.





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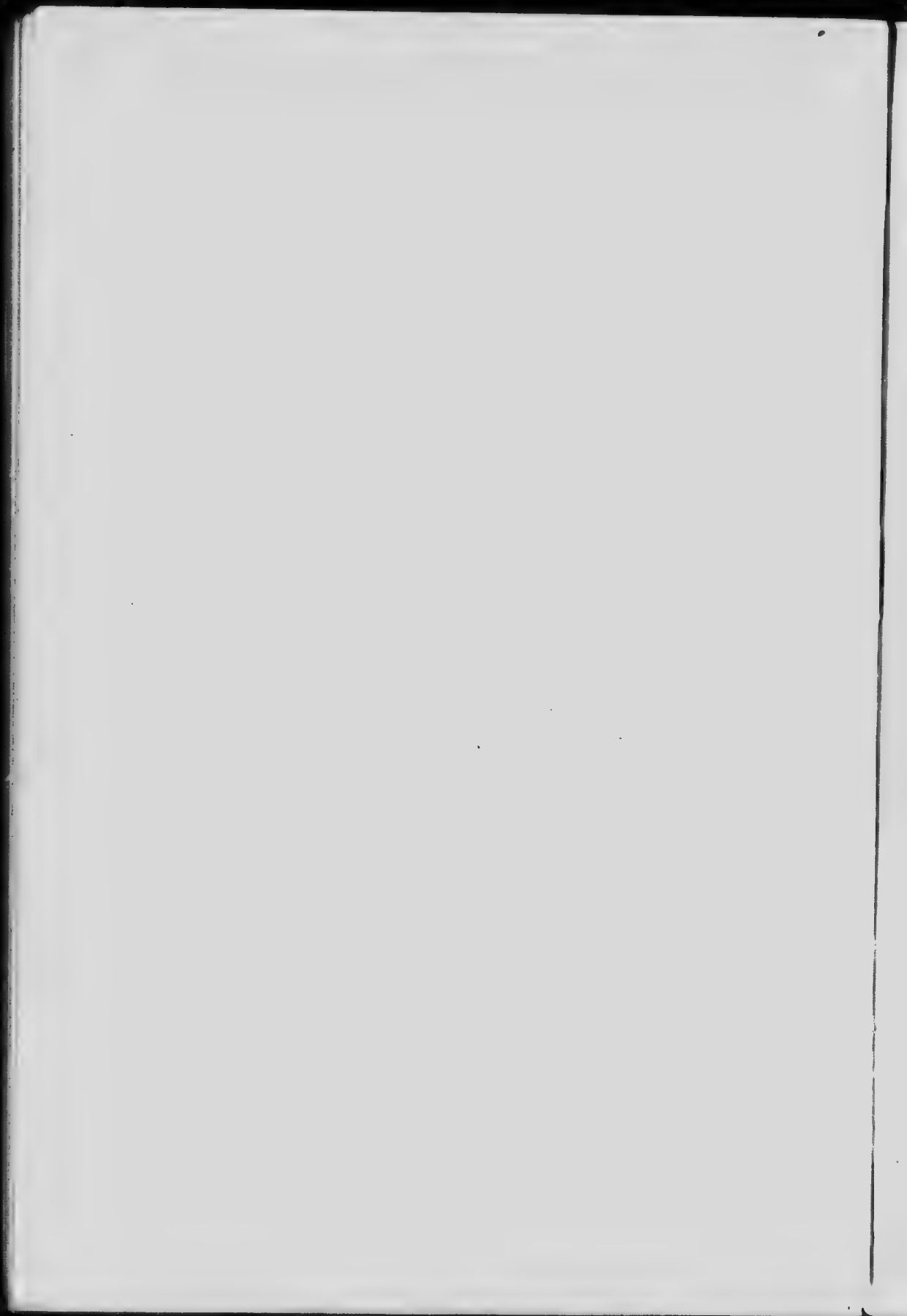
For blasts would rise and rave and cease, 83
 But whence were those that drove the sail
 Across the whirlwind's heart of peace,
 And to and thro' the counter gale?

Again to colder climes we came,
 For still we follow'd where she led : 90
 Now mate is blind and captain lame,
 And half the crew are sick or dead,
 But, blind or lame or sick or sound,
 We follow that which flies before :
 We know the merry world is round, 95
 And we may sail for evermore.

IN THE VALLEY OF CAUTERETZ.

ALL along the valley, stream that flashest white,
 Deepening thy voice with the deepening of the night,
 All along the valley, where thy waters flow,
 I walk'd with one I loved two and thirty years ago.
 All along the valley, while I walk'd to-day, 5
 The two and thirty years were a mist that rolls away ;
 For all along the valley, down thy rocky bed,
 Thy living voice to me was as the voice of the dead,
 And all along the valley, by rock and cave and tree,
 The voice of the dead was a living voice to me. 10

POEMS
BY
ROBERT BROWNING



BROWNING.

CAVALIER TUNES.

I. MARCHING ALONG.

I.

KENTISH Sir Byng stood for his King,
Bidding the crop-headed Parliament swing :
And, pressing a troop unable to stoop
And see the rogues flourish and honest folk droop,
Marched them along, fifty-score strong, 5
Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song.

II.

God for King Charles ! Pym and such carles
To the Devil that prompts 'em their treasonous
parles !
Cavaliers, up ! Lips from the cup,
Hands from the pasty, nor bite take nor sup 10
Till you're—

Chorus,—

*Marching along, fifty-score strong,
Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song.*

III.

Hampden to hell, and his obsequies' knell
 Serve Hazelrig, Fiennes, and young Harry as well ! 15
 England, good cheer ! Rupert is near !
 Kentish and loyalists, keep we not here

Chorus,—

*Marching along, fifty-score strong,
 Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song ?*

IV.

Then, God for King Charles ! Pym and his snarls 20
 To the Devil that pricks on such pestilent carles !
 Hold by the right, you double your might ;
 So, onward to Nottingham, fresh for the fight,

Chorus,—

*March we along, fifty-score strong,
 Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song ! 25*

II. GIVE A ROUSE.

I.

KING CHARLES, and who'll do him right now ?
 King Charles, and who's ripe for fight now ?
 Give a rouse : here's, in hell's despite now,
 King Charles !

II.

Who gave me the goods that went since ?
 Who raised me the house that sank once ?
 Who helped me to gold I spent since ?
 Who found me in wine you drank once ?

Chorus,—

King Charles, and who'll do him right now ?
King Charles, and who's ripe for fight now ? 10
Give a rouse : here's, in hell's despite now,
King Charles !

III.

To whom used my boy George quaff else,
 By the old fool's side that begot him ?
 For whom did he cheer and laugh else, 15
 While Noll's damned troopers shot him ?

Chorus,—

King Charles, and who'll do him right now ?
King Charles, and who's ripe for fight now ?
Give a rouse : here's, in hell's despite now,
King Charles ! 20

III. BOOT AND SADDLE.

I.

Boot, saddle, to horse, and away !
 Rescue my castle before the hot day
 Brightens to blue from its silvery gray,
Chorus,—Boot, saddle, to horse, and away !

II.

Ride past the suburbs, asleep as you'd say ; 5
 Many's the friend there, will listen and pray
 "God's luck to gallants that strike up the lay—
Chorus,—“ Boot, saddle, to horse, and away ! ”

III.

Forty miles off, like a roebuck at bay,
 Flouts Castle Brancepeth the Roundheads' array : 10
 Who laughs, "Good fellows ere this, by my fay,
Chorus,—"Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!"

IV.

Who? My wife Gertrude; that, honest and gay,
 Laughs when you talk of surrendering, "Nay!
 "I've better counsellors; what counsel they? 15
Chorus,—"Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!"

MY LAST DUCHESS.

FERRARA.

THAT's my last Duchess painted on the wall,
 Looking as if she were alive. I call
 That piece a wonder, now: Frà Pandolf's hands
 Worked busily a day, and there she stands.
 Will't please you sit and look at her? I said 5
 "Frà Pandolf" by design: for never read
 Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
 The depth and passion of its earnest glance,
 But to myself they turned (since none puts by
 The curtain I have drawn for you, but I) 10
 And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,
 How such a glance came there; so, not the first
 Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 't was not

Her husband's presence only, called that spot
Of joy into the Duchess' cheek : perhaps 15
Frà Pandolf chanced to say " Her mantle laps
" Over my lady's wrist too much," or " Paint
" Must never hope to reproduce the faint
" Half-flush that dies along her throat : " such
stuff

Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough 20
For calling up that spot of joy. She had
A heart—how shall I say ?—too soon made glad,
Too easily impressed ; she liked whate'er
She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.
Sir, 't was my name ! My favour at her breast, 25
The colour of the daylight in the West,
The best of cherries some officious fool
Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule
She rode with round the terrace—all and each
Would draw from her alike the approving speech, 30
Or blush, at least. She thanked men,—good !
but thanked

Somehow—I know not how—as if she ranked
My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name
With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to blame
This sort of trifling ? Even had you skill 35
In speech—(which I have not)—to make your will
Quite clear to such an one, and say, " Just this
" Or that in you disgusts me ; here you miss,
" Or there exceed the mark "—and if she let
Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set 40
Her wit to yours, forsooth, and made excuse,

—E'en then would be some stooping ; and I choose
 Never to stoop. Oh sir, she smiled, no doubt,
 Whene'er I passed her ; but who passed without
 Much the same smile ? This grew ; I gave
 commands ;

45

Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands
 As if alive. Will 't please you rise ? We'll meet
 The company below, then. I repeat,
 The Count your master's known munificence
 Is ample warrant that no just pretence
 Of mine for dowry will be disallowed ;
 Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed
 At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go
 Together down, sir. Notice Neptune, though,
 Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,
 Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me !

50

55

“HOW THEY BROUGHT THE GOOD NEWS
 FROM GHENT TO AIX.”

[16—.]

I.

I SPRANG to the stirrup, and Joris, and he ;
 I galloped, Dirck galloped, we galloped all three ;
 “Good speed !” cried the watch, as the gate-bolts
 undrew ;
 “Speed !” echoed the wall to us galloping through ;
 Behind shut the postern, the lights sank to rest,
 And into the midnight we galloped abreast.

5

II.

Not a word to each other ; we kept the great pace
Neck by neck, stride by stride, never changing our
place ;

I turned in my saddle and made its girths tight,
Then shortened each stirrup, and set the pique right, 10
Rebuckled the cheek-strap, chained slacker the bit,
Nor galloped less steadily Roland a whit.

III.

'Twas moonset at starting ; but while we drew near
Lokeren, the cocks crew and twilight dawned clear ;
At Boom, a great yellow star came out to see ; 15
At Düffeld, 'twas morning as plain as could be ;
And from Mecheln church-steeple we heard the half-
chime,
So, Joris broke silence with, "Yet there is time !"

IV.

At Aershot, up leaped of a sudden the sun,
And against him the cattle stood black every one, 20
To stare thro' the mist at us galloping past,
And I saw my stout galloper Roland at last,
With resolute shoulders, each butting away
The haze, as some bluff river headland its spray :

V.

And his low head and crest, just one sharp ear bent 25
back
For my voice, and the other pricked out on his track ;

And one eye's black intelligence,—ever that glance
 O'er its white face at me, his own master, askance!
 And the thick heavy spume-flakes which aye and
 anon

His fierce lips shook upwards in galloping on.

30

VI.

By Hasselt, Dirck groaned; and cried Joris "Stay
 spur!

"Your Roos galloped bravely, the fault's not in her,
 "We'll remember at Aix"—for one heard the quick
 wheeze

Of her chest, saw the stretched neck and staggering
 knees,

And sunk tail, and horrible heave of the flank,
 As down on her haunches she shuddered and sank.

35

VII.

So, we were left galloping, Joris and I,
 Past Looz and past Tongres, no cloud in the sky;
 The broad sun above laughed a pitiless laugh,
 'Neath our feet broke the brittle bright stubble like
 chaff;

Till over by Dalhem a dome-spire sprang white,
 And "Gallop," gasped Joris, "for Aix is in sight!"

VIII.

"How they 'll greet us!"—and all in a moment his
 roan

Rolled neck and croup over lay dead as a stone;

"HOW THEY BROUGHT THE GOOD NEWS." 101

And there was my Roland to bear the whole weight 45
Of the news which alone could save Aix from her
fate,

With his nostrils like pits full of blood to the brim,
And with circles of red for his eye-sockets' rim.

IX.

Then I cast loose my buffcoat, each holster 'et fall,
Shook off both my jack-boots, let go belt and all, 50
Stood up in the stirrup, leaned, patted his ear,
Called my Roland his pet-name, my horse without
peer ;

Clapped my hands, laughed and sang, any noise, bad
or good,

Till at length into Aix Roland galloped and stood.

X.

And all I remember is—friends flocking round 55
As I sat with his head 'twixt my knees on the ground ;
And no voice but was praising this Roland of mine,
As I poured down his throat our last measure of wine,
Which (the burgesses voted by common consent)
Was no more than his due who brought good news 60
from Ghent.

HOME-THOUGHTS, FROM ABROAD.

I.

Oh, to be in England now that April's there,
 And whoever wakes in England sees, some
 morning, unaware,
 That the lowest boughs and the brushwood sheaf
 Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,
 While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough 5
 In England—now !

II.

And after April, when May follows,
 And the whitethroat builds, and all the swallows !
 Hark, where my blossomed pear-tree in the hedge
 Leans to the field and scatters on the clover 10
 Blossoms and dewdrops—at the bent spray's
 edge—
 That's the wise thrush : he sings each song
 twice over,
 Lest you should think he never could recapture
 The first fine careless rapture !
 And though the fields look rough with hoary dew 15
 All will be gay when noontide wakes anew
 The buttercups, the little children's dower
 —Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower !

LOVE AMONG THE RUINS.

I.

WHERE the quiet-coloured end of evening smiles,
Miles and miles
On the solitary pastures where our sheep
Half-asleep
Tinkle homeward through the twilight, stray or stop
As they crop—
Was the site once of a city great and gay,
(So they say)
Of our country's very capital, its prince
Ages since
Held his court in, gathered councils, wielding far
Peace or war.

II.

Now,—the country does not even boast a tree,
 As you see,
 To distinguish slopes of verdure, certain rills
 From the hills
 Intersect and give a name to, (else they run
 Into one)
 Where the domed and daring palace shot its spires
 Up like fires
 O'er the hundred-gated circuit of a wall
 Bounding all,
 Made of marble, men might march on nor be pressed,
 Twelve abreast.

III.

And such plenty and perfection, see, of grass 25
 Never was !
Such a carpet as, this summer-time, o'erspreads
 And embeds
Every vestige of the city, guessed alone,
 Stock or stone— 30
Where a multitude of men breathed joy and woe
 Long ago ;
Lust of glory pricked their hearts up, dread of shame
 Struck them tame ;
And that glory and that shame alike, the gold 35
 Bought and sold.

IV.

Now,—the single little turret that remains
 On the plains,
By the caper overrooted, by the gourd
 Overscored, 40
While the patching houseleek's head of blossom
 winks
 Through the chinks—
Marks the basement whence a tower in ancient time
 Sprang sublime,
And a burning ring, all round, the chariots traced 45
 As they raced,
And the monarch and his minions and his dames
 Viewed the games.

v.

And I know, while thus the quiet-coloured eve
 Smiles to leave 50
 To their folding, all our many-tinkling fleece
 In such peace,
 And the slopes and rills in undistinguished gray
 Melt away—
 That a girl with eager eyes and yellow hair 55
 Waits me there
 In the turret whence the charioteers caught soul
 For the goal,
 When the king looked, where she looks now, breath-
 less, dumb
 Till I come. 60

vi.

But he looked upon the city, every side,
 Far and wide,
 All the mountains topped with temples, all the
 glades'
 Colonnades,
 All the causeys, bridges, aqueducts,—and then, 65
 All the men !
 When I do come, she will speak not, she will stand,
 Either hand
 On my shoulder, give her eyes the first embrace
 Of my face, 70
 Ere we rush, ere we extinguish sight and speech
 Each on each.

VII.

In one year they sent a million fighters forth
 South and North,
 And they built their gods a brazen pillar high 75
 As the sky,
 Yet reserved a thousand chariots in full force—
 Gold, of course.
 Oh heart! oh blood that freezes, blood that burns!
 Earth's returns 80
 For whole centuries of folly, noise and sin!
 Shut them in,
 With their triumphs and their glories and the rest!
 Love is best.

 UP AT A VILLA—DOWN IN THE CITY.

(AS DISTINGUISHED BY AN ITALIAN PERSON OF
 QUALITY.)

I.

HAD I but plenty of money, money enough and to
 spare,
 The house for me, no doubt, were a house in the
 city-square;
 Ah, such a life, such a life, as one leads at the
 window there!

II.

Something to see, by Bacchus, something to hear, at
 least!

There, the whole day long, one's life is a perfect feast ; 5
While up at a villa one lives, I maintain it, no more
than a beast.

III.

Well now, look at our villa ! stuck like the horn of
a bull
Just on a mountain-edge as bare as the creature's
skull,
Save a mere shag of a bush with hardly a leaf to pull !
—I scratch my own, sometimes, to see if the hair's 10
turned wool.

IV.

But the city, oh the city—the square with the
houses ! Why ?
They are stone-faced, white as a curd, there's some-
thing to take the eye !
Houses in four straight lines, not a single front awry ;
You watch who crosses and gossips, who saunters,
who hurries by ,
Green blinds, as a matter of course, to draw when 15
the sun gets high ;
And the shops with fanciful signs which are painted
properly.

V.

What of a villa ? Though winter be over in March
by rights,
'Tis May perhaps ere the snow shall have withered
well off the heights :
You've the brown ploughed land before, where the
oxen steam and wheeze,

And the hills over-smoked behind by the faint gray 20
olive-trees.

VI.

Is it better in May, I ask you? You've summer all
at once;

In a day he leaps complete with a few strong April
suns.

'Mid the sharp short emerald wheat, scarce risen
three fingers well,

The wild tulip, at end of its tube, blows out its great
red bell

Like a thin clear bubble of blood, for the children 25
to pick and sell.

VII.

Is it ever hot in the square? There's a fountain to
spout and splash!

In the shade it sings and springs; in the shine su h
foam bows flash

On the horses with curling fish-tails, that prance and
paddle and pash

Round the lady atop in her conch—fifty gazers do
not abash,

Though all that she wears is some weeds round her 30
waist in a sort of sash.

VIII.

All the year long at the villa, nothing to see though
you linger,

Except yon cypress that points like death's lean
lifted forefinger.

Some think fireflies pretty, when they mix i' the corn
and mingle,
Or thrud the stinking hemp till the stalks of it seem
a-tingle.

Late August or early September, the stunning cicada 35
is shrill,

And the bees keep their tiresome whine round the
resinous firs on the hill.

Enough of the seasons,—I spare you the months of
the fever and chill.

IX.

Ere you open your eyes in the city, the blessed
church-bells begin :

No sooner the bells leave off than the diligence
rattles in :

You get the pick of the news, and it costs you never 40
a pin.

By-and-by there's the travelling doctor gives pills,
lets blood, draws teeth ;

Or the Pulcinello-trumpet breaks up the market
beneath.

At the post-office such a scene-picture—the new play,
piping hot !

And a notice how, only this morning, three liberal
thieves were shot.

Above it, behold the Archbishop's most fatherly of 45
rebukes,

And beneath, with his crown and his lion, some little
new law of the Duke's !

Or a sonnet with flowery marge, to the Reverend
 Don So-and-so
 Who is Dante, Boccaccio, Petrarca, St. Jerome and
 Cicero,
 "And moreover," (the sonnet goes rhyming,) "the
 skirts of St. Paul has reached,
 "Having preached us those six Lent-lectures more
 unctuous than ever he preached." 50
 Noon strikes,—here sweeps the procession! our Lady
 borne smiling and smart
 With a pink gauze gown all spangles, and seven
 swords stuck in her heart!
Bang-whang-whang goes the drum, *tootle-te-tootle* the
 fife;
 No keeping one's haunches still: it's the greatest
 pleasure in life.

X.

But bless you, it's dear—it's dear! fowls, wine, at 55
 double the rate.
 They have clapped a new tax upon salt, and what oil
 pays passing the gate
 It's a horror to think of. And so, the villa for me,
 not the city!
 Beggars can scarcely be choosers: but still—ah, the
 pity, the pity!
 Look, two and two go the priests, then the monks
 with cowls and sandals,
 And the penitents dressed in white shirts, a-holding 60
 the yellow candles;

One, he carries a flag up straight, and another a cross
with handles.

And the Duke's guard brings up the rear, for the
better prevention of scandals :

Bang-whang-whang goes the drum, *tootle-te-tootle* the
fife.

Oh, a day in the city-square, there is no such pleasure
in life !



"L'Angelo Custode," by Guercino.

THE GUARDIAN-ANGEL.

A PICTURE AT FANO.

I.

DEAR and great Angel, wouldst thou only leave
 That child, when thou hast done with him, for me !
 Let me sit all the day here, that when eve
 Shall find performed thy special ministry,
 And time come for departure, thou, suspending
 Thy flight, mayst see another child for tending,
 Another still to quiet and retrieve.

5

II.

Then I shall feel thee step one step, no more,
 From where thou standest now, to where I gaze,
 —And suddenly my head is covered o'er 10
 With those wings, white above the child who prays
 Now on that tomb—and I shall feel thee guarding
 Me, out of all the world ; for me, discarding
 Yon heaven thy home, that waits and opes its door.

III.

I would not look up thither past thy head 15
 Because the door opes, like that child, I know,
 For I should have thy gracious face instead,
 Thou bird of God ! And wilt thou bend me low
 Like him, and lay, like his, my hands together,
 And lift them up to pray, and gently tether 20
 Me, as thy lamb there, with thy garment's spread ?

IV.

If this was ever granted, I would rest
 My head beneath thine, while thy healing hands
 Close-covered both my eyes beside thy breast,
 Pressing the brain, which too much thought 25
 expands,
 Back to its proper size again, and smoothing
 Distortion down till every nerve had soothing,
 And all lay quiet, happy and suppressed.

V.

How soon all worldly wrong would be repaired !
 I think how I should view the earth and skies 30

And sea, when once again my brow was bared
 After thy healing, with such different eyes.
 O world, as God has made it! All is beauty:
 And knowing this is love, and love is duty,
 What further may be sought for or declared?

35

VI.

Guercino drew this angel I saw teach
 (Alfred, dear friend!)—that little child to pray,
 Holding the little hands up, each to each
 Pressed gently,—with his own head turned away
 Over the earth where so much lay before him
 Of work to do, though heaven was opening o'er him,
 And he was left at Fano by the beach.

40

VII.

We were at Fano, and three times we went
 To sit and see him in his chapel there,
 And drink his beauty to our soul's content
 —My angel with me too: and since I care
 For dear Guercino's fame (to which in power
 And glory comes this picture for a dower,
 Fraught with a pathos so magnificent)—

45

VIII.

And since he did not work thus earnestly
 At all times, and has else endured some wrong—
 I took one thought his picture struck from me,
 And spread it out, translating it to song.
 My love is here. Where are you, dear old friend?
 How rolls the Wairoa at your world's far end?
 This is Ancona, yonder is the sea.

50

55

ANDREA DEL SARTO.

(CALLED "THE FAULTLESS PAINTER.")

BUT do not let us quarrel any more,
No, my Lucrezia ; bear with me for once :
Sit down and all shall happen as you wish.
You turn your face, but does it bring your heart ?
I'll work then for your friend's friend, never fear, 5
Treat his own subject after his own way,
Fix his own time, accept too his own price,
And shut the money into this small hand
When next it takes mine. Will it ? tenderly !
Oh, I'll content him,—but to-morrow, Love ! 10
I often am much wearier than you think,
This evening more than usual, and it seems
As if—forgive now—should you let me sit
Here by the window with your hand in mine
And look a half-hour forth on Fiesole, 15
Both of one mind, as married people use,
Quietly, quietly the evening through,
I might get up to-morrow to my work
Cheerful and fresh as ever. Let us try.
To-morrow, how you shall be glad for this ! 20
Your soft hand is a woman of itself,
And mine the man's bared breast she curls inside.
Don't count the time lost, neither ; you must serve
For each of the five pictures we require :
It saves a model. So ! keep looking so— 25
My serpentining beauty, rounds on rounds !
—How could you ever prick those perfect ears,



Andrea and Stefano and His Wife. Evaristo attributed to the artist himself.

Even to put the pearl there ! oh, so sweet—
 My face, my moon, my everybody's moon,
 Which everybody looks on and calls his, 30
 And, I suppose, is looked on by in turn,
 While she looks—no one's : very dear, no less.
 You smile ? why, there's my picture ready made,
 There's what we painters call our harmony !
 A common greyness silvers everything,— 35
 All in a twilight, you and I alike
 —You, at the point of your first pride in me
 (That's gone, you know),—but I, at every point ;
 My youth, my hope, my art, being all toned down
 To yonder sober pleasant Fiesole. 40
 There's the bell clinking from the chapel-top ;
 That length of convent-wall across the way
 Holds the trees safer, huddled more inside ;
 The last monk leaves the garden ; days decrease,
 And autumn grows, autumn in everything. 45
 Eh ? the whole seems to fall into a shape,
 As if I saw alike my work and self
 And all that I was born to be and do,
 A twilight-piece. Love, we are in God's hand.
 How strange now, looks the life he makes us lead ; 50
 So free we seem, so fettered fast we are !
 I feel he laid the fetter : let it lie !
 This chamber for example—turn your head—
 All that's behind us ! You don't understand
 Nor care to understand about my art, 55
 But you can hear at least when people speak :
 And that cartoon, the second from the door

—It is the thing, Love ! so such things should be—
 Behold Madonna !—I am bold to say.
 I can do with my pencil what I know, 60
 What I see, what at bottom of my heart
 I wish for, if I ever wish so deep—
 Do easily, too—when I say, perfectly,
 I do not boast, perhaps : yourself are judge,
 Who listened to the Legate's talk last week, 65
 And just as much they used to say in France.
 At any rate 't is easy, all of it !
 No sketches first, no studies, that's long past :
 I do what many dream of, all their lives,
 —Dream ? strive to do, and agonize to do, 70
 And fail in doing. I could count twenty such
 On twice your fingers, and not leave this town,
 Who strive—you don't know how the others strive
 To paint a little thing like that you smeared
 Carelessly passing with your robes afloat,— 75
 Yet do much less, so much less, Someone says,
 (I know his name, no matter)—so much less !
 Well, less is more, Lucrezia : I am judged.
 There burns a truer light of God in them,
 In their vexed beating stuffed and stopped-up brain, 80
 Heart, or whate'er else, than goes on to prompt
 This low-pulsed forthright craftsman's hand of mine.
 Their works drop groundward, but themselves, I know,
 Reach many a time a heaven that's shut to me,
 Enter and take their place there sure enough, 85
 Though they come back and cannot tell the world.
 My works are nearer heaven, but I sit here.

The sudden blood of these men ! at a word—
Praise them, it boils, or blame them, it boils too.
I, painting from myself and to myself, 90
Know what I do, am unmoved by men's blame
Or their praise either. Somebody remarks
Morello's outline there is wrongly traced,
His hue mistaken ; what of that ? or else,
Rightly traced and well ordered ; what of that ? 95
Speak as they please, what does the mountain care
Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,
Or what's a heaven for ? All is silver-grey,
Placid and perfect with my art : the worse !
I know both what I want and what might gain, 100
And yet how profitless to know, to sigh
" Had I been two, another and myself,
" Our head would have o'erlooked the world ! " No doubt.
Yonder's a work now, of that famous youth
The Urbinate who died five years ago. 105
('T is copied, George Vasari sent it me.)
Well, I can fancy how he did it all,
Pouring his soul, with kings and popes to see,
Reaching, that heaven might so replenish him,
Above and through his art—for it gives way ; 110
That arm is wrongly put—and there again—
A fault to pardon in the drawing's lines,
Its body, so to speak : its soul is right,
He means right—that, a child may understand.
Still, what an arm ! and I could alter it : 115
But all the play, the insight and the stretch—
Out of me, out of me ! And wherefore out ?

Had you enjoined them on me, given me soul,
 We might have risen to Rafael, I and you !
 Nay, Love, you did give all I asked, I think— 120
 More than I merit, yes, by many times.
 But had you—oh, with the same perfect brow,
 And perfect eyes, and more than perfect mouth,
 And the low voice my soul hears, as a bird
 The fowler's pipe, and follows to the snare— 125
 Had you, with these the same, but brought a mind !
 Some women do so. Had the mouth there urged
 "God and the glory ! never care for gain.
 "The present by the future, what is that ?
 "Live for fame, side by side with Agnolo ! 130
 "Rafael is waiting : up to God, all three !"
 I might have done it for you. So it seems :
 Perhaps not. All is as God over-rules.
 Beside, incentives come from the soul's self ;
 The rest avail not. Why do I need you ? 135
 What wife had Rafael, or has Agnolo ?
 In this world, who can do a thing, will not ;
 And who would do it, can not, I perceive :
 Yet the will's somewhat—somewhat, too, the power
 And thus we half-men struggle. At the end, 140
 God, I conclude, compensates, punishes.
 'Tis safer for me, if the award be strict,
 That I am something underrated here,
 Poor this long while, despised, to speak the truth.
 I dared not, do you know, leave home all day, 145
 For fear of chancing on the Paris lords.
 The best is when they pass and look aside ;

But they speak sometimes ; I must bear it all.
 Well may they speak ! That Francis, that first time,
 And that long festal year at Fontainebleau ! 150
 I surely then could sometimes leave the ground,
 Put on the glory, Rafael's daily wear,
 In that humane great monarch's golden look,—
 One finger in his beard or twisted curl
 Over his mouth's good mark that made the smile, 155
 One arm about my shoulder, round my neck,
 The jingle of his gold chain in my ear,
 I painting proudly with his breath on me,
 All his court round him, seeing with his eyes,
 Such frank French eyes, and such a fire of souls 160
 Profuse, my hand kept plying by those hearts,—
 And, best of all, this, this, this face beyond,
 This in the background, waiting on my work,
 To crown the issue with a last reward !
 A good time, was it not, my kingly days ? 165
 And had you not grown restless . . . but I know—
 'T is done and past ; 'twas right, my instinct said :
 Too live the life grew, golden and not grey,
 And I'm the weak-eyed bat no sun should tempt
 Out of the grange whose four walls make his world. 170
 How could it end in any other way ?
 You called me, and I came home to your heart.
 The triumph was—to reach and stay there ; since
 I reached it ere the triumph, what is lost ?
 Let my hands frame you as in your hair's gold, 175
 You beautiful Lucrezia are mine !
 "Rafael did this, Andrea painted that :

"The Roman's is the better when you pray,
 "But still the other's Virgin was his wife—"
 Men will excuse me. I am glad to judge 190
 Both pictures in your presence; clearer grows
 My better fortune, I resolve to think.
 For, do you know, Lucrezia, as God lives,
 Said one day Agnolo, his very self,
 To Rafael . . . I have known it all these years . . . 195
 (When the young man was flaming out his thoughts
 Upon a palace-wall for Rome to see,
 Too lifted up in heart because of it)
 "Friend, there's a certain sorry little scrub
 "Goes up and down our Florence, none cares how, 190
 "Who, were he set to plan and execute
 "As you are, pricked on by your popes and kings,
 "Would bring the sweat into that brow of yours!"
 To Rafael's!—And indeed the arm is wrong.
 I hardly dare . . . yet, only you to see, 195
 Give the chalk here—quick, thus the line should go!
 Ay, but the soul! he's Rafael! rub it out!
 Still, all I care for, if he spoke the truth,
 (What he? why, who but Michel Agnolo?
 Do you forget already words like those?) 200
 If really there was such a chance, so lost,—
 Is, whether you're—not grateful—but more pleased.
 Well, let me think so. And you smile indeed!
 This hour has been an hour! Another smile?
 If you would sit thus by me every night 205
 I should work better, do you comprehend?
 I mean that I should earn more, give you more.

See, it is settled dusk now ; there's a star ;
Morello's gone, the watch-lights show the wall,
The cue-owls speak the name we call them by. 210
Come from the window, love,—come in, at last,
Inside the melancholy little house
We built to be so gay with. God is just.
King Francis may forgive me : oft at nights
When I look up from painting, eyes tired out, 215
The walls become illumined, brick from brick
Distinct, instead of mortar, fierce bright gold,
That gold of his I did cement them with !
Let us but love each other. Must you go ?
That Cousin here again ? he waits outside ? 220
Must see you—you, and not with me ? Those loans ?
More gaming debts to pay ? you smiled for that ?
Well, let smiles buy me ! have you more to spend ?
While hand and eye and something of a heart
Are left me, work's my ware, and what's it worth ? 225
I'll pay my fancy. Only let me sit
The grey remainder of the evening out,
Idle, you call it, and muse perfectly
How I could paint, were I but back in France,
One picture, just one more—the Virgin's face, 230
Not yours this time ! I want you at my side
To hear them—that is, Michel Agnolo—
Judge all I do and tell you of its worth.
Will you ? To-morrow, satisfy your friend.
I take the subjects for his corridor, 235
Finish the portrait out of hand—there, there,
And throw him in another thing or two

If he demurs ; the whole should prove enough
 To pay for this same Cousin's freak. Beside,
 What's better and what's all I care about, 240
 Get you the thirteen scudi for the ruff!
 Love, does that please you? Ah, but what does he,
 The Cousin! what does he to please you more?

I am grown peaceful as old age to-night.
 I regret little, I would change still less. 245
 Since there my past life lies, why alter it?
 The very wrong to Francis!—it is true
 I took his coin, was tempted and complied,
 And built this house and sinned, and all is said.
 My father and my mother died of want. 250
 Well, had I riches of my own? you see
 How one gets rich! Let each one bear his lot.
 They were born poor, lived poor, and poor they died:
 And I have laboured somewhat in my time
 And not been paid profusely. Some good son 255
 Paint my two hundred pictures—let him try!
 No doubt, there's something strikes a balance. Yes,
 You loved me quite enough, it seems to-night.
 This must suffice me here. What would one have?
 In heaven, perhaps, new chances, one more chance— 260
 Four great walls in the New Jerusalem,
 Meted on each side by the angel's reed,
 For Leonard, Rafael, Agnolo and me
 To cover—the three first without a wife,
 While I have mine! So—still they overcome 265
 Because there's still Lucrezia,—as I choose.

Again the Cousin's whistle! Go, my Love.

AN EPISTLE

CONTAINING THE STRANGE MEDICAL EXPERIENCE OF
KARSHISH, THE ARAB PHYSICIAN.

KARSHISH, the picker-up of learning's crumbs,
The not-incurious in God's handiwork
(This man's-flesh he hath admirably made,
Blown like a bubble, kneaded like a paste,
To coop up and keep down on earth a space 5
That puff of vapour from his mouth, man's soul)
—To Abib, all-sagacious in our art,
Breeder in me of what poor skill I boast,
Like me inquisitive how pricks and cracks
Befall the flesh through too much stress and strain, 10
Whereby the wily vapour fain would slip
Back and rejoin its source before the term,—
And aptest in contrivance (under God)
To baffle it by deftly stopping such :—
The vagrant Scholar to his Sage at home 15
Sends greeting (health and knowledge, fame with peace)
Three samples of true snake-stone—rarer still,
One of the other sort, the melon-shaped,
(But fitter, pounded fine, for charms than drugs)
And writeth now the twenty-second time. 20

My journeyings were brought to Jericho :
Thus I resume. Who studious in our art
Shall count a little labour unrepaid ?
I have shed sweat enough, left flesh and bone
On many a flinty furlong of this land. 25

Also, the country-side is all on fire
 With rumours of a marching hitherward :
 Some say Vespasian cometh, some, his son.
 A black lynx snarled and pricked a tufted ear :
 Lust of my blood inflamed his yellow balls : 30
 I cried and threw my staff and he was gone.
 Twice have the robbers stripped and beaten me,
 And once a town declared me for a spy ;
 But at the end, I reach Jerusalem,
 Since this poor covert where I pass the night, 35
 This Bethany, lies scarce the distance thence
 A man with plague-sores at the third degree
 Runs till he drops down dead. Thou laughest here !
 'Sooth, it elates me, thus reposed and safe,
 To void the stuffing of my travel-scrip 40
 And share with thee whatever Jewry yields.
 A viscid choler is observable
 In tertians, I was nearly bold to say ;
 And falling-sickness hath a happier cure
 Than our school wots of : there's a spider here 45
 Weaves no web, watches on the ledge of tombs,
 Sprinkled with mottles on an ash-grey back ;
 Take five and drop them . . . but who knows
 his mind,
 The Syrian runagate I trust this to ?
 His service payeth me a sublimate 50
 Blown up his nose to help the ailing eye.
 Best wait : I reach Jerusalem at morn,
 There set in order my experiences,
 Gather what most deserves, and give thee all—

Or I might add, Judæa's gum-tragacanth 55
 Scales off in pure flakes, shine^r clearer-grained,
 Cracks 'twixt the pestle and the porphyry,
 In fine exceeds our produce. Scalp-disease
 Confounds me, crossing so with leprosy—
 Thou hadst admired one sort I gained at Zoar— 60
 But zeal outruns discretion. Here I end.

Yet stay : my Syrian blinketh gratefully,
 Protesteth his devotion is my price—
 Suppose I write what harms not, though he steal ?
 I half resolve to tell thee, yet I blush, 65
 What set me off a-writing first of all.
 An itch I had, a sting to write, a tang !
 For, be it this town's barrenness—or else
 The Man had something in the look of him—
 His case has struck me far more than 't is worth. 70
 So, pardon if—(lest presently I lose,
 In the great press of novelty at hand,
 The care and pains this somehow stole from me)
 I bid thee take the thing while fresh in mind,
 Almost in sight—for, wilt thou have the truth ? 75
 The very man is gone from me but now,
 Whose ailment is the subject of discourse.
 Thus then, and let thy better wit help all !

'T is but a case of mania—subinduced
 By epilepsy, at the turning-point 80
 Of trance prolonged unduly some three days :
 When, by the exhibition of some drug
 Or spell, exorcisation, stroke of art

Unknown to me and which 't were well to know
 The evil thing, out-breaking all at once 85
 Left the man whole and sound of body indeed,—
 But, flinging (so to speak) life's gates too wide
 Making a clear house of it too suddenly,
 The first conceit that entered might inscribe
 Whatever it was minded on the wall 90
 So plainly at that vantage, as it were
 (First come, first served) that nothing subsequent
 Attaineth to erase those fancy-scrawls
 The just-returned and new-established soul
 Hath gotten now so thoroughly by heart 95
 That henceforth she will read or these or none.
 And first —the man's own firm conviction rests
 That he was dead (in fact they buried him)
 —That he was dead and then restored to life
 By a Nazarene physician of his tribe : 100
 —' Sayeth, the same bade " Rise," and he did rise.
 " Such cases are diurnal," thou wilt cry.
 Not so this figment!—not, that such a fume,
 Instead of giving way to time and health,
 Should eat itself into the life of life, 105
 As saffron tingeth flesh, blood, bones and all !
 For see, how he takes up the after-life.
 The man—it is one Lazarus a Jew,
 Sanguine, proportioned, fifty years of age,
 The body's habit wholly laudable, 110
 As much, indeed, beyond the common health
 As he were made and put aside to show.
 Think, could we penetrate by any drug

And bathe the wearied soul and worried flesh,
And bring it clear and fair, by three days' sleep ! 115
Whence has the man the balm that brightens all ?
This grown man eyes the world now like a child.
Some elders of his tribe, I should premise,
Led in their friend, obedient as a sheep,
To bear my inquisition. While they spoke, 120
Now sharply, now with sorrow,—told the case,—
He listened not except I spoke to him,
But folded his two hands and let them talk,
Watching the flies that buzzed : and yet no fool.
And that's a sample how his years must go. 125
Look if a beggar, in fixed middle-life,
Should find a treasure,—can he use the same
With straitened habits and with tastes starved small,
And take at once to his impoverished brain
The sudden element that changes things, 130
That sets the undreamed-of rapture at his hand
And puts the cheap old joy in the scorned dust ?
Is he not such an one as moves to mirth—
Warily parsimonious, when no need,
Wasteful as drunkenness at undue times ? 135
All prudent counsel as to what befits
The golden mean, is lost on such an one :
The man's fantastic will is the man's law.
So here—we call the treasure knowledge, say,
Increased beyond the fleshly faculty— 140
Heaven opened to a soul while yet on earth,
Earth forced on a soul's use while seeing heaven :
The man is witless of the size, the sum,

The value in proportion of all things,
 Or whether it be little or be much. 145
 Discourse to him of prodigious armaments
 Assembled to besiege his city now,
 And of the passing of a mule with gourds—
 'T is one ! Then take it on the other side,
 Speak of some trifling fact,—he will gaze rapt 150
 With stupor at its very littleness,
 (Far as I see) as if in that indeed
 He caught prodigious import, whole results ;
 And so will turn to us the bystanders
 In ever the same stupor (note this point) 155
 That we too see not with his opened eyes.
 Wonder and doubt come wrongly into play,
 Preposterously, at cross purposes.
 Should his child sicken unto death,—why, look
 For scarce abatement of his cheerfulness, 160
 Or pretermission of the daily craft !
 While a word, gesture, glance from that same child
 At play or in the school or laid asleep,
 Will startle him to an agony of fear,
 Exasperation, just as like. Demand 165
 The reason why—" 't is but a word," object—
 " A gesture "—he regards thee as our lord
 Who lived there in the pyramid alone,
 Looked at us (dost thou mind ?) when, being young,
 We both would unadvisedly recite 170
 Some charm's beginning, from that book of his,
 Able to bid the sun throb wide and burst
 All into stars, as suns grown old are wont.

Thou and the child have each a veil alike
Thrown o'er your heads, from under which ye both 175
Stretch your blind hands and trifle with a match
Over a mine of Greek fire, did ye know !
He holds on firmly to some thread of life—
(It is the life to lead perforcedly)
Which runs across some vast distracting orb 180
Of glory on either side that meagre thread,
Which, conscious of, he must not enter yet—
The spiritual life around the earthly life :
The law of that is known to him as this,
His heart and brain move there, his feet stay here. 185
So is the man perplexed with impulses
Sudden to start off crosswise, not straight on,
Proclaiming what is right and wrong across,
And not along, this black thread through the blaze—
“It should be” balked by “here it can not be.” 190
And oft the man's soul springs into his face
As if he saw again and heard again
His sage that bade him “Rise” and he did rise.
Something, a word, a tick o' the blood within
Admonishes : then back he sinks at once 195
To ashes, who was very fire before,
In sedulous recurrence to his trade
Whereby he earneth him the daily bread ;
And studiously the humbler for that pride,
Professedly the faultier that he knows 200
God's secret, while he holds the thread of life.
Indeed the especial marking of the man
Is prone submission to the heavenly will—

Seeing it, what it is, and why it is.
 'Sayeth, he will wait patient to the last 205
 For that same death which must restore his being
 To equilibrium, body loosening soul
 Divorced even now by premature full growth :
 He will live, nay, it pleaseth him to live
 So long as God please, and just how God please. 210
 He even seeketh not to please God more
 (Which meaneth, otherwise) than as God please.
 Hence, I perceive not he affects to preach
 The doctrine of his sect whate'er it be,
 Make proselytes as madmen thirst to do : 215
 How can he give his neighbour the real ground,
 His own conviction? Ardent as he is—
 Call his great truth a lie, why, still the old
 "Be it as God please" reassureth him.
 I probed the sore as thy disciple should : 220
 "How, beast," said I, "this stolid carelessness
 "Sufficeth thee, when Rome is on her march
 "To stamp out like a little spark thy town,
 "Thy tribe, thy crazy tale and thee at once?"
 He merely looked with his large eyes on me. 225
 The man is apathetic, you deduce?
 Contrariwise, he loves both old and young,
 Able and weak affects the very brutes
 And birds—how say I? flowers of the field—
 As a wise workman recognizes tools 230
 In a master's workshop, loving what they make.
 Thus is the man as harmless as a lamb :
 Only impatient, let him do his best,

At ignorance and carelessness and sin—
 An indignation which is promptly curbed : 235
 As when in certain travel I have feigned
 To be an ignoramus in our art
 According to some preconceived design,
 And happed to hear the land's practitioners
 Steeped in conceit sublimed by ignorance, 240
 Prattle fantastically on disease,
 Its cause and cure— and I must hold my peace !

Thou wilt object—Why have I not ere this
 Sought out the sage himself, the Nazarene
 Who wrought this cure, inquiring at the source, 245
 Conferring with the frankness that boasts ?
 Alas ! it grieveth me, the learned lee
 Perished in a tumult many years ago,
 Accused,—our learning's fate—of wizardry,
 Rebellion, to the setting up a rule 250
 And creed prodigious as described to me.
 His death, which happened when the earthquake fell
 (Prefiguring, as soon appeared, the loss
 To occult learning in our lord the sage
 Who lived there in the pyramid alone) 255
 Was wrought by the mad people—that's their wont !
 On vain recourse, as I conjecture it,
 To his tried virtue, for miraculous help—
 How could he stop the earthquake? That's their
 way !
 The other imputations must belie : 260
 But take one, though I loathe to give it thee,

In mere respect for any good man's fame.
 (And after all, our patient Lazarus
 Is stark mad ; should we count on what he says ?
 Perhaps not : though in writing to a leech 265
 'Tis well to keep back nothing of a case.)
 This man so cured regards the curer, then,
 As—God forgive me ! who but God himself,
 Creator and sustainer of the world,
 That came and dwelt in flesh. In it awhile. 270
 —'Sayeth that such a one was born and lived,
 Taught, healed the sick, broke bread at his own
 house,
 Then died, with Lazarus by, for aught I know,
 And yet was . . . what I said nor choose repeat,
 And must have so avouched himself, in fact, 275
 In hearing of this very Lazarus
 Who saith—but why all this of what he saith ?
 Why write of trivial matters, things of price
 Calling at every moment for remark ?
 I noticed on the margin of a pool 280
 Blue-flowering borage, the Aleppo sort,
 Aboundeth, very nitrous. It is strange !

Thy pardon for this long and tedious case,
 Which, now that I review it, needs must seem
 Unduly dwelt upon, prolixly set forth ! 285
 Nor I myself discern in what is writ
 Good cause for the peculiar interest
 And awe indeed this man has touched me with.
 Perhaps the journey's end, the weariness

Had wrought upon me first. I met him thus : 290
I crossed a ridge of short sharp broken hills
Like an old lion's cheek teeth. Out there came
A moon made like a face with certain spots
Multiform, manifold and menacing :
Then a wind rose behind me. So we met 295
In this old sleepy town at unaware,
The man and I. I send thee what is writ.
Regard it as a chance, a matter risked
To this ambiguous Syrian : he may lose,
Or steal, or give it thee with equal good. 300
Jerusalem's repose shall make amends
For time this letter wastes, thy time and mine ;
Till when, once more thy pardon and farewell !
The very God ! think, Abib ; dost thou think ?
So, the All-Great, were the All-Loving too— 305
So, through the thunder comes a human voice
Saying, "O heart I made, a heart beats here !
"Face, my hands fashioned, see it in myself !
"Thou hast no power nor mayst conceive of mine,
"But love I gave thee, with myself to love 310
"And thou must love me who have died for thee!"
The madman saith He said so : it is strange.

PROSPICE.

FEAR death?—to feel the fog in my throat,
 The mist in my face,
 When the snows begin, and the blasts denote
 I am nearing the place,
 The power of the night, the press of the storm, 5
 The post of the foe;
 Where he stands, the Arch Fear in a visible form,
 Yet the strong man must go:
 For the journey is done and the summit attained,
 And the barriers fall, 10
 Though a battle's to fight ere the guerdon be gained,
 The reward of it all.
 I was ever a fighter, so—one fight more,
 The best and the last!
 I would hate that death bandaged my eyes, and forbore, 15
 And bade me creep past.
 No! let me taste the whole of it, fare like my peers
 The heroes of old,
 Bear the brunt, in a minute pay glad life's arrears
 Of pain, darkness and cold. 20
 For sudden the worst turns the best to the brave,
 The black minute's at end,
 And the elements' rage, the fiend-voices that rave,
 Shall dwindle, shall blend,
 Shall change, shall become first a peace out of pain, 25
 Then a light, then thy breast,
 O thou soul of my soul! I shall clasp thee again,
 And with God be the rest!

NOTES.



HAWTHORN TREE, BROOK AND BRIDGE, SOMERSBY.

NOTES.

POEMS BY ALFRED TENNYSON.

THE POET.

Composition and publication. *The Poet* forms part of the little volume *Poems, chiefly Lyrical*, published in 1830 (see Introduction).

Theme and treatment. *The Poet* and *The Poet's Mind*, show Tennyson, in his early years, conscious of the high mission of the poet's art. Of the two poems the latter vindicates the poet's mind against the shallow wit and cruel sneers of men who through cynical sophistry and sin have become incapable of appreciating its natural purity and melody. The poet's mind is like a fountain,

"It springs on a level of bowery lawn
And the mountain draws it from Heaven above,
And it sings a song of undying love;
And yet, tho' its voice be so clear and full
You never would hear it; your ears are so dull;
So keep where you are: you are foul with sin;
It would shrink to the earth if you came in."

The Poet makes clear the objective side of poetry—the power of the poet to influence the world, a power founded on his special gifts of sympathy, intuitive insight, and intellect. His thoughts borne on winged words abroad among men call forth their thought and lend a power to their expression. Thus truth is multiplied, and men enlightened with wisdom attain a mighty and bloodless freedom. The poet is therefore a gentle but irresistible intellectual power making for enlightened liberty. So Tennyson conceived his mission.

In a later poem, *The Poet's Song* (1842), he tells us of the sublime charm of poetry, greater than that in the lark's or nightingale's song, for it shows forth the perfect future:

"For he sings of what the world will be
When the years have died away."

Metrical form. The stanza used is a quatrain in iam-bics—a five-accent line alternately, first with a three-accent, then with a two-accent line, with alternate rimes, *a b a b*.

Page 53. ll. 3f.—Dowered . . . love. "That is, the Prophet of Truth receives for his dower the scorn of men in whose breasts scorn dwells, hatred from men who hate, while his reward is in the gratitude and affection of men who seek the truth which they love, more eagerly than the faults, which their acuteness can blame."—F. W. Robertson, quoted by Rolfe. But this is surely a wrong interpretation. The early stanzas treat alone of the natural gifts of the poet; to introduce the world's treatment of him would be inconsistent with the obvious plan, just as the assumption that he is scorned and hated is inconsistent with the whole thought of the poem. The meaning therefore is "having received from nature the qualities that make him hate hatred, despise scorn, and love love."

ll. 5ff.—He saw . . . lay. The mysteries of life, death, good, evil, of his personal existence, he understood, and

the wonderful designs of God were clear to him. Cf. Milton's purpose in *Paradise Lost* to "justify the ways of God to men."

ll. 9f.—**echoing feet . . . fame.** He knew the world thoroughly, even in the highest walks of life, where only the famous few are permitted to tread. "Echoing" is probably only an ornamental epithet, but may hint at the wonder with which his marvellous insight would be regarded by others.

threaded. The meaning is derived from that in "to thread a needle"; hence here to pass carefully through all the intricacies of the way.

l. 11.—**viewless.** A Shakesperian word; cf.

"To be imprison'd in the viewless winds."

—*Measure for Measure* III i, 124.

Page 54. l. 13.—**Indian reeds.** The South-American Indians, the Dyaks of Borneo, etc., use the blowpipe, a long wooden tube, with a bore the size of the little finger, through which they blow small poisoned arrows made of split cane. The comparison will bear illustration from Longfellow's *The Arrow and the Song*. Its meaning is: "The power of utterance, vivid, penetrative, germinal, illuminative, carrying truth and giving wisdom."—Tainsh, p. 32.

l. 15.—**Calpe** (*cal' pē*). Calpe and Ab'yła are the two pillars of Hercules, the ancient names of two rocks which, it was said, Hercules tore apart to admit the ocean to the Mediterranean. Calpe is identified with Gibraltar, Abyla with Ceuta. They marked the western boundary of the known world, just as the Caucasus marked the eastern boundary.

l. 19.—**arrow-seeds.** The flower is the dandelion. Notice the exquisite turn of the simile, to prepare for ll. 20f., as well as the acute view of nature. Below (ll. 25ff.) the two thoughts in "arrow-seed" are beautifully separated and expanded.

l. 24.—**A flower all gold.** So Lowell wrote,
 "Dear common flower, that grow'st beside the way,
 Fringing the dusty road with harmless gold."
 —*To the Dandelion.*

l. 25.—**bravely.** Finely, admirably. This sense is archaic, but was common in Shakspeare's time.

l. 27.—**breathing.** Animated, full of life and spirit.

l. 29.—**gird their orbs with beams.** The figure is as of the moon reflecting the sun's rays. The poet's thoughts are taken into many minds and furnish them with a glorious but borrowed strength. Cf. Wordsworth's use of orb,

"That mighty orb of song
 The divine Milton."
 —*The Excursion*, i.

l. 35.—**wreaths of floating dark upcurl'd.** "The breaking up of the darkness like mist or cloud" (Rolfe); but possibly "wreaths of floating dark" is the poet's rhetoric for thin clouds fading away (upcurl'd) at dawn, and so, figuratively, the ignorance of men dispelled by truth.

l. 36.—**Rare.** Uncommon and beautiful. Cf.

"Divine and rare and precious."
 —*Midsummer Night's Dream*, III, II.

Page 55. l. 39.—**rites.** Spiritual life tends to harden and formalize into rites and forms in which vitality gradually dies; new truths dawn on men with power to make them put aside the old husks and shells of truth.

his burning eyes. Sunrise, typifying truth. The imagery recalls Shelley, *The Cloud*.

"The sanguine sunrise, with his meteor eyes,
 And his burning plumes outspread."

l. 41.—**There was no blood.** The bloody scenes of the French Revolution, where truth had not always enlightened freedom, were still fresh in many minds.

l. 55.—**one poor poet.** Contrast with the first stanzas; compared with Freedom the poet indeed is little; but the change of epithets throws emphasis through the littleness of the being upon the terrific force of his word.

Pitched in a lower key, this thought is iterated (Tainsh) in the epilogue to *The Charge of the Heavy Brigade*.

"And here the Singer for his Art
Not all in vain may plead,
'The song that nerves a nation's heart
Is in itself a deed.'"

THE LADY OF SHALOTT.

Composition and publication. This poem, first published in *Poems*, 1832, is the earliest flower of Tennyson's interest in Arthurian poetry. It was subsequently polished and revised until the present form of the poem, which appeared in *Poems*, 1842, is very different from the first.

Its source. Professor Palgrave asserts that the poem was suggested by "an Italian romance upon the Donna di Scalotta,—in which Camelot, unlike the Celtic tradition, was placed near the sea."—*Lyrical Poems of Lord Tennyson*, p. 257. Churton Collins, *Illustrations of Tennyson*, p. 35, is unable to identify the romance, though possibly Novella lxxxi. of the collection *Libro di Novelle* (1804) is the one in question, as in it Camelot is near the sea. But the poem owes nothing to the novel.

The theme and treatment. The poem is a lyrical treatment of the story of Lancelot and Elaine, daughter of Sir Bernard of Astolat, the same story which Tennyson twenty-seven years later was to work up on the basis of the eighteenth book of Malory into the idyll of *Elaine*.

The whole poem is a work of romantic imagination; yet there is a current of real life beneath the mystical words. Alfred Ainger says of this, "The key to this wonderful tale of magic, and yet of deep human significance, is to be found perhaps in the lines,

"Or when the moon was overhead,
Came two young lovers lately wed;
'I am half sick of shadows' said
The Lady of Shalott."

The new-born love of something, for some one, in the wide world from which she has been so long excluded, takes her out of the region of shadows into that of realities. The curse is the anguish of unrequited love. The shock of her disappointment kills her."

It is a lyrical treatment of the story, so that much of its charm must consist in its subtle suggestiveness rather than in its clear narrative. The elusive charm of suggestion is everywhere in the poem; it breathes from the changing landscape, from the lonely isle, from its lonely lady, fairy-like, beautiful, and unhappy, from the gay song of Lancelot, from the mysterious fate that blights her, from her loveliness in death. Professor Rhys holds that the poem "perhaps surpasses everything else Tennyson has written in the weird fascination it exercises over the reader's mind, at any rate if he happens to be a Celt."

—*Studies*, etc.

Metrical form. Note the form:—a nine-line stanza, iambic trimeter—four lines held together by the rimes *aaa*, with a refrain; followed by three lines united by the rime *ccc*, with a second refrain rining with the first. It is a stanza of great difficulty, yet here mastered.

PART I.

Page 56. Title. *Shalott*. From "Escalot," a variant form of "Astolat." In Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*, Astolat is inland, and Elaine commanded that when dead she should be laid with her bed and richest clothes, "in a chariot unto the next (nearest) place where Thames is, and let me be put within a barget, and but one man with me . . . to steer me" (xviii, 19). In Malory likewise it is at Westminster that her barge is observed, not at Camelot. But Tennyson shifts the Arthurian localities into the geography of the imagination.

l. 1.—*either*. Quite properly used for each of two.

l. 5.—**Camelot.** The geography of Arthurian localities is a vast ground of disputation. "Camelot, that is Winchester," says Malory. Tennyson imagines it on the Thames in *Lancelot and Elaine*, above London and below Astolat (now in English called Gilford) (Malory).

l. 10.—**willows whiten, aspens, etc.** The white underside of the leaf made visible when stirred by the breeze. The same phenomenon may be noticed with our maples. The aspen, or tremulous poplar (*populus tremula*), takes its scientific name from the peculiar readiness of its leaves to respond to the slightest breath of air, so that the "quivering aspen" is proverbial. "How exquisite is the word 'whiten' to describe the turning of the long willow-leaves in the wind, and how well it suggests the cool colouring of the whole picture, all in low tones, except the little spot of flowers below the square, gray castle."—Van Dyke, *The Poetry of Tennyson*, p. 298.

l. 11.—**breezes dusk and shiver.** The water darkens through the ripples breaking the reflected light. Everyone who sails will appreciate this touch of description. "Dusk" as a verb is very rare.

Page 57. l. 29.—**bearded.** Having stiff hairs on the ears of barley. l. 30.—**cheerly.** An archaic form,—cheerily. Cf.

"Cheerly rouse the slumbering morn."

—Milton, *L'Allegro*.

PART II.

l. 38.—**web.** In Malory and in *Lancelot and Elaine*, it is worth noting, Elaine weaves, *after* she had met Lancelot, a cover for his shield left in her charge.

Page 58. l. 46.—**a mirror.** Magic mirrors figure in romance since the *Arabian Nights*. Cf. Cambuscan's mirror (Chaucer's *Squire's Tale*, ll. 132ff.) in which one foresaw adversity, discovered friend or foe, true or false lover.

l. 52.—**village-churls.** Churl, a rustic, a labourer. (A.S. *ceorl*, a freeman of the lowest rank.) Cf.

“It was not made for village churls.”

—Scott, *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, Intr.

l. 56.—**pad.** A horse for riding on the road. (The word is abbreviated from *pad-nag*, *pad-horse*, in which “pad” is the same word as “path,” of which it is a provincial form; cf. “roadster.”)

l. 64.—**still.** Ever; as frequently in Shakspeare, e.g. “the still-vexed Bermoothes,” *Tempest*, i, ii.

PART III.

Page 59. l. 76.—**brazen greaves.** Metal armour for the shins. (O.F. *greve*, shank, shin). Cf.

“Around

His manly legs with silver buckles bound

The clasping greaves.”

—Pope, *Iliad*, xvi.

l. 77.—**of bold Sir Lancelot.** The foremost of King Arthur's knights, lover of Arthur's queen. See *Lancelot and Elaine* and *Guinevere* in the *Idylls of the King*. “Horse and man, sunlight and scenery, gleaming river and glancing armour—how they fit together . . . The verse flashes and scintillates like the armour, like the eyes of Lancelot in the sunlight. The passage is perhaps almost over-sparkled . . . but it is a wonderful piece of gold and jewel-work, and only Milton can excel it in its own sphere.” —Stepford Brooke, p. 118.

l. 78.—**red-cross knight.** The red-cross on a white mantle was the emblem borne by the Knights Templars. The cross is the emblem of Lancelot's devotion to the cause of Christian knighthood; the lady with the kneeling knight, of chivalry, in which devotion to women was supreme.

l. 80.—**yellow field.** Cf. l. 29.

l. 82.—**The gemmy bridle.** The adornment of the bridle was characteristic of wealthy cavaliers. The bells

hung on it furnished Chaucer with the well-known picture of the Monk.

"And when he rode, men mighte his bridel here (hear)
Gingeling (jingling) in a whistling wind."

—*Prologue to the Cant. Tales*, 101f.

l. 83.—**branch of stars.** A figure from an elaborate candelabrum, each arm of which is called a branch.

l. 84.—**Galaxy.** The Milky Way. L. *galaxias*, the Milky Way. Gk. *gala*, milk.

"Seen in the galaxy, that milky way,
Which nightly, as a circling zone, thou seest
Powder'd with stars."

—Milton, *Paradise Lost*, vii.

l. 87.—**blazon'd baldric.** A belt or girdle richly ornamented, worn over the shoulder and passed under the opposite arm.

l. 91.—**All in the blue**, etc. This use of "all in" constitutes a poetical phrase, introducing usually a scenic effect. Cf.

"All in an oriel on the summer side
Vine-clad, of Arthur's palace toward the stream
They met."
—*Lancelot and Elaine*.

Page 60. l. 98.—**bearded meteor.** A comet with a train or tail. Comets are actually classed by some as "bearded, tailed, and hairy." (Indeed the word "comet" is Gk. *komētēs*, having long hair.)

l. 101.—**hoovs.** A rare and archaic plural form.

l. 103.—**curls.** A distinctive mark of the knight as compared with the low-born.

l. 107.—**Tirra lirra.** The note as of a lark. Cf. Shakespeare, "The lark that tirra-lirra chants."

—*Winter's Tale*, iv, ii, 9.

(The word is the O. Fr. *tirelire*, warble of the lark,—an imitative word.)

The original reading of this line was:

"Tirra lirra, tirra lirra."

l. 110.—**three paces.** The mystic effect is heightened by the use of definite numbers. It is a device frequent in the Pre-Raphaelite school. Cf.

"She had three lilies in her hand,
And the stars in her hair were seven."

—Rossetti, *The Blessed Damozel*.

l. 111.—**the water-lily.** Originally, the waterflower.

PART IV.

l. 119.—**pale yellow woods.** Note the change of season, and the harmony of the background with the incidents throughout.

Page 61. l. 129.—**seeing . . . mischance.** Having the power to foresee evil, he in his prophetic trance is suddenly confronted with the vision of his own evil future.

Page 62. ll. 166.—**crossed themselves.** To make a sign of the cross was held a protection from evil spirits, etc.

ENONE.

Composition and publication. The poem was inspired by the visit of Tennyson and Arthur Hallam to the Pyrenees in the autumn of 1830. They went to carry money and letters of encouragement to the Spanish revolutionists. "A wild time we had of it," Hallam said. "I played my part as conspirator in a small way, and made friends with two or three gallant men."

It was published in *Poems*, by Alfred Tennyson, 1833, and republished with changes in the volumes of 1842, which gives virtually the final text.

Theme and treatment. Paris (l. 16) was the son of Priam, king of Troy. There were such gloomy prophecies concerning him as destined to become the ruin of his country, that his father ordered him killed in his infancy. The slave commissioned to execute the command contented

himself with exposing him on Mount Ida, where the shepherds found him and educated him as their own child (l. 126). He married Ænone (l. 15), a nymph of Ida, and gained the esteem of the shepherds. As the most beautiful of mortals, he was chosen by Zeus as arbiter of the question of the fairest of the goddesses. He deserted Ænone in favour of Helen, the fair wife promised him by Aphrodite when he awarded her the prize of the fairest. By this fatal love he brought the Greeks on Troy and so fulfilled the prophecy. He was wounded during the siege, and ordered himself to be carried to Ænone. He died before he could reach her, and she, remembering her former love, stabbed herself on his body. This conclusion to the story is not used by Tennyson in the present poem, but was taken up years afterwards by him in *The Death of Ænone*, his last poem. The same theme has been treated by William Morris in *The Death of Paris*, in *The Earthly Paradise*.

The poem belongs to the order of classical reproductions—that is, classical story retold with modern touches. Notice, for instance, the nature touches and ornate detail of this poem. “*Ænone* is thoroughly Greek in spirit though far richer in detail than the Greek art, a severe thing, as this commonly is.”—Aubrey de Vere, quoted in the *Tennyson Memoir*, I, 504. This modern romantic treatment of classical story began with John Keats.

Page 63. l. 1.—*Ida*. A range of mountains in Phrygia belonging to the system of Mt. Taurus. It traverses western Mysia in many branches, whence it was compared to a milleped. The highest point, Gargarus (l. 10), rises to about 4,650 feet above the sea level. The greater part of the range is covered with wood and contains the sources of innumerable streams and many rivers (l. 22). Subordinate ranges, parting from the principal summit, may be said to enclose the territory of Troas in a crescent (l. 12).

According to Strabo, there is a mountain belonging to the range of Ida called Alexandria, where Paris (Alexander) was believed to have pronounced his judgment as to the beauty of the goddesses.

l. 2.—**Ionian.** Ionia, in ancient geography, a portion of the west coast of Asia Minor, adjoining the Ægean Sea, and bounded by Lydia towards the east.

l. 3.—**The swimming vapour, etc.** Note the imitative harmony of movement in thought and rhythm.

l. 10.—**topmost Gargarus.** The summit of Gargarus (a classical construction). Cf. *Iliad*, xiv, 292; "topmost Gargaros, the highest crest of Ida." (Mustard.)

l. 11.—**Stands up and takes the morning.** Cf. Juvenal, vii, 183: "Surgat et argentem rapiat cenatio solem." (Mustard.)

l. 13.—**Troas.** The territory ruled over by the ancient kings of Troy or Ilium, which retained its ancient and venerable name long after the kingdom to which it originally belonged had ceased to exist. Homer himself nowhere describes the extent of Troas. . . . In later times Troas was a part of Mysia, comprising the coast district on the Ægean, from Cape Lectum to the neighbourhood of Dardanus and Abydos on the Hellespont; while inland it extended about eight geographical miles, that is as far as Mount Ida. (Smith.)

Ilion. Ilium, Ilios, sometimes called also Troy. It was the principal city of the kingdom of Troas, and was situated on rising ground somewhat above the plain between the rivers Scamander and Simois. The form Ilion is usual in the tragedies and Ilios in Homer.

ll. 15, 16.—**Mournful Cēnone . . . hills.** Cf. Ovid, *Heroides*, v, 157, "Sed tua sum tecumque fui puerilibus annis." "It is perhaps to these words that we owe Tennyson's *Cēnone*: certainly we owe to them the words" of these lines. Palmer's Commentary, quoted by Mustard.

l. 19.—**leaning on . . vine.** “The attitude of the mournful Ænone . . is the attitude of the jilted goatherd of *Idyll* iii, 38 of Theocritus. ‘Here will I lean him against this pine tree and sing.’ Cf. also Virgil, *Eclogue* viii, 16, ‘Incumbens tereti Damon sic coepit olivæ.’” (Mustard.)

l. 22.—**many-fountain’d Ida.** A stock Homeric phrase. *Iliad* xiv, 157, 283, 307.

l. 23.—**Dear mother Ida,** etc. The line recurs like the refrain of the first idyll of Theocritus, “Begin, ye Muses dear, begin the pastoral song.” (Mustard.)

“The opening lines of Ænone’s complaint . . . are modelled upon Theocritus. . . . For details of the picture compare *Idyll* vii, 22,—‘When the verry lizard on the rough stone wall is sleeping, and the crested larks no longer fare afield,’ and ii, 38, the complaint of the forsaken Simaetha.” (Mustard.)

Page 64. l. 36.—crown’d snake. Probably the basilisk, a serpent much feared. According to Pliny it derived its name “kingly” from a spot on its head resembling a crown, but mediæval writers furnished it with a coronet. If this conception had any reference to a real animal it was probably to some species resembling the cobra de capello. The epithet “cold” is applied to a snake in Virgil:—

Qui legitis flores et humi nascentia fraga,
Frigidus, O pueri, fugite hinc, latet anguis in herba.
—*Eclogue*, iii, 92, 93.

l. 37.—**daughter of a River-God.** Cf. Ovid, *Heroides*, v, 10, “edita de magno flumine nympha fui.” (Mustard.)

ll. 38-40.—**build up . . . as yonder walls.** Ovid, *Heroides*, xv, 76. The legend of the building of the walls of Troy: the stones were moved into their place by the music of Apollo’s lyre: “Moenia Phoeteae structa canone lyrae.” (Mustard.) Cf. Tennyson, *Tithonus*, ll. 62, 63.

“Like that strange song I heard Apollo sing,
While Ilion like a mist rose into towers.”

l. 49. — **Beautiful Paris, evil-hearted Paris.** *Iliad*, iii, 39. "Ill Paris, most fair in semblance." (Mustard.)

l. 51. — **Simois.** A small river of Troas, having its source in Mount Ida, and passing by Ilion, it joined the Scamander. It is frequently spoken of in the *Iliad*, and described as a rapid mountain torrent. The epithet "whirling" in l. 202, would seem more in accord with this description than "reedy."

Page 65. ll. 57. — **leopard skin.** The costume of Paris in Homer—*Iliad* iii, 17, "wearing upon his shoulder a panther-skin."

l. 65. — **A fruit of pure Hesperian gold.** The Hesperides were four sisters, guardians of the golden apples given to Hera on her marriage with Zeus.

l. 66. — **smelling ambrosially.** Ambrosia was the food of the gods. The name was also applied to an unguent used by them. Hence ambrosial came to mean sweet-smelling, perfumed with this unguent. See l. 174.

l. 72. — **Oread.** The Oreades were the nymphs who presided over mountains. (Gk. *oros*, mountain.)

l. 74. — **charm of married brows.** A mark of beauty in the classical world. See Theocritus, *Idyll*, viii, 72, "the girl with meeting eyebrows." Cf. also Ovid, *Ars Amatoria*, iii, 201.

ll. 79ff. — **halls of Peleus.** Peleus, a mortal, married the Nereid Thetis. All the gods took part in the marriage festivities except Eris, the goddess of strife, who was not invited. Enraged at the slight she threw a golden apple among the guests with the inscription "to the fairest." Heré, Aphrodité and Pallas each claimed the apple. Zeus ordered Hermes to take the goddesses to Mount Ida, and to entrust the decision to Paris, the shepherd, but king-born. Heré offered him sovereignty, Athenè renown in war, and Aphrodité the fairest of women for his wife. He gave the apple to Aphrodité, thereby bringing on

himself the deadly hatred of the other two. Aphrodite led him to Helen, the beautiful wife of Menelaus of Lacedemon, and his abduction of her led to the Trojan war.

Page 66. l. 81.—**Iris.** The goddess of the rainbow and one of the messengers of the gods,—“light-foot Iris,” *Iliad*, xviii, 202.

l. 83.—**Herè.** More usually written Hera. She is the great feminine deity of Olympus, and wife to Zeus. She is the type of virtuous womanhood, and is represented in art as a majestic woman, enveloped in flowing draperies, crowned and carrying a sceptre. The Romans identified with her their own goddess Juno.

l. 84.—**Pallas.** The goddess of knowledge, arts, sciences; and righteous war. She embodied the spirit of truth and divine wisdom. In art she is represented in the chiton, or tunic, and equipped with the ægis, a sort of mantle fringed with serpents, which symbolized the storm-cloud enveloping the thunderbolt, and hence the power of protection. In sign of this power she also carries a spear (l. 137).

Aphrodite, the goddess of love, identified by the Romans with Venus. She is fabled to have arisen from the foam of the sea at Cyprus (Gk. *aphros*, foam).

l. 93.—**naked.** In Ovid, *Heroides*, v, Aphrodite alone presents herself unclad.

ll. 94-96.—**the crocus brake**, etc. *Iliad*, xiv, 347-351. “And beneath them the divine earth sent forth fresh new grass, and dewy lotus, and crocus and hyacinth.” (Mustard.) Cf. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, iv, 700-702.

Underfoot the violet,
Crocus and hyacinth, with rich inlay
Broïdered the ground.

l. 95.—**amaracus** (*ah mar' a kuss*). Marjoram, an aromatic plant.

Asphodel. Asphodel. A liliaceous plant, with tall spikes of flowers, said to cover the Elysian fields, and celebrated by the poets.

l. 102.—**peacock.** Among the various birds sacred to Juno the peacock was often called *Junonis avis*. According to the story Argus had a hundred eyes of which only two were asleep at once. Juno ordered him to keep a watch for her, but Mercury, by order of Jupiter, lulled all his eyes to sleep by the music of his lyre, and so slew him. Juno put all his eyes into the tail of the peacock.

l. 103. — **golden cloud.** From the *Iliad*, xiv, 350. "Therein they lay and were clad on with a fair golden cloud, whence fell drops of glittering dew." (Mustard.)

ll. 107, 108.—**the gods rise up.** *Iliad*, xv, 86. "And when they beheld her they all rose up together and held out their cups to her in welcome." (Mustard.)

Page 67. l. 112.—**champaign** (*tcham'pain*). Lat. *campania*, plain, level country. Taken into English not in the Norman or North Fr. form, *campagne*, but in that of central France. The pronunciation with 't' and stress on the first syllable is exemplified already in the fourteenth century in alliterative verse. The same accentuation is shown by all English poets from Shakspeare to Tennyson and Browning (Murray).

l. 129.—**quiet seats.** Cf. Lucretius, iii, 14ff., "*sedesque quietae*." (Mustard.)

Page 68. l. 151.—**guerdon.** Reward, requital. Now poetical and rhetorical. The word is so thoroughly mediæval in its origin and use, that it seems more in key with *Enid* than with *Enone*.

l. 162.—**Sinew'd with action.** Cf. Shakspeare, *Henry IV*, Pt. 2, iv, i. 172. "Insinew'd to this action."

l. 164. — **commesure.** To measure as an exact equivalent.

Page 69. l. 170.—**Idalian.** Idalia was a town in Cyprus, adjoining to which was a forest sacred to Aphrodite.

l. 171.—**Paphian.** Old Paphos, on the south-west coast of Cyprus, was the chief seat of the worship of Aphrodite. It was not far distant from the spot where she is said to have arisen from the sea.

l. 174.—**ambrosial.** See note to l. 66.

Page 70. l. 195.—**Pard.** Panther (Lat. *pardus*, a male panther). Now archaic. Cf. Shakspeare, *As You Like It*, ii, vii, 150; also Shelley, *Adonais*, xxxii, 1.

l. 220.—**the Abominable.** Eris, the goddess of discord, who threw the apple into the assemblage of the gods.

l. 208.—**callow.** Unfledged, without feathers. Not improbably an adoption for Lat. *calvus*, bald (Murray).

Page 72. l. 257.—**the Greek woman.** Helen. The wife of Menelaus, abducted by Paris. The other princes of Greece joined Menelaus for revenge, hence the Trojan war.

l. 259.—**Cassandra.** A daughter of Priam and Hecuba, who was passionately loved by Apollo. She obtained from the god the power of knowing futurity, and then slighted him. In revenge he declared that no credit should ever be given to her predictions. She foresaw the destruction of Troy, but the Trojans only thought her mad.

l. 264.—**All earth and air.** "This passage in *Ænone* . . . has its warrant in the cry to Cassandra, Æschylus, *Agamemnon*, 1256. 'Ah me, how the fire comes upon me here.'" (Mustard.)

ST. AGNES' EVE.

Composition and publication. This poem first appeared in *The Keepsake* for 1837, and was slightly altered when reprinted in *Poems, by Alfred Tennyson*, 1842. The title was changed from "St. Agnes" to "St. Agnes' Eve" in the edition of 1855. (Rolfe.)

Theme and treatment. The feast of St. Agnes, virgin and Christian martyr, is kept on January 21st. St. Jerome says that the tongues and pens of all nations are employed in the praises of this saint. St. Augustine observes that her name in Greek signifies chaste, and in Latin a lamb. She has always been regarded as the special patroness of purity, and her emblem in Christian art is a lamb.

St. Agnes was the child of Christian parents and was early dedicated to the religious life. Refusing the love of the son of the Prefect of Rome because she was resolved to become the bride of Christ as a nun, she was denounced as a Christian. It was the time of the persecution under Diocletian in the fourth century. She suffered shame, temptation, torture and death for her faith.

The observance of her festival begins at the evening service of the day before, when the special teaching of the occasion is emphasized. The feast of St. Agnes was formerly held as in a special degree a holiday for women. Ceremonies performed on the eve were supposed to bring to a woman knowledge of her future—love and marriage. This belief is the foundation of Kearsley's *Eve of St. Agnes*, where he has transfused his story and imagery with love passion.

Tennyson's treatment of the theme dwells on the truer signification of the St. Agnes story—the mystic rapture of the Bride of Christ, devoted to the cloister. The poem has a pendant in *Sir Galahad*. Waugh speaks of the poem as displaying the momentary influence of Keble.

Metrical form. The stanza-form used is a triple quatrain with alternate rimes in each quatrain — *ab ac ed cd, ef ef*; the movement is iambic, a line of four accents alternating with one of three.

Page 72. l. 1. — the convent roof. Note how suggestions of scene, season, time, nature reference harmonize with the idea of the poem.

l. 11. — **first snowdrop.** This is putting the first snowdrop earlier than is warranted by tradition and association. The snowdrop is supposed to bloom at Candlemas (February 2nd), hence its name "fair maid of February" recognized by Tennyson himself in

"Many, many welcomes
February fair-maid
Ever as of old time,
Solitary firstling."

The Snowdrop.

Page 73. l. 16. — argent round. The moon at the full. Argent in heraldry is silver or white. Tennyson uses it for white in

"Serene with argent-bidded eye

Recollections of the Arabian Nights, l. 135.

l. 24. — **raiment white and clean.** Revelations XIX, 7, 8.

l. 25. — **golden doors.** Though in Revelations XXI, 17, 21, the gates of the New Jerusalem are said to be of pearl, yet the city itself is of pure gold, and the idea is persistent in Chaucer's imagery. Cf. "Jerusalem the golden" Neale's translation of Bernard of Clugny's "Urbs Syon aurea," and a Latin "O mea spes mea, tu Syon aurea, clarior aurea."

l. 28. — **strows.** Archaic form for strews.

l. 29. — **gates.** Cf. Psalms XXIV, 7.

l. 31. — **Heavenly Bridegroom.** Revelations XIX, 7.

l. 33. — **sabbath.** Hebrew *shabbath*, i.e. rest. The word that remaineth to the people of God is a favourite

aspect of the future life with hymn writers, ancient and modern. Cf.

Oh, what the joy and the glory must be;
Those endless Sabbaths the blessed ones see! . . .
There dawns no Sabbath, no Sabbath is o'er,
Those Sabbath-keepers have one evermore.

—Abelard, tr. J. M. Neale.

THE EPIC AND MORTE D'ARTHUR.

Composition and publication. The poem was completed in 1837. "Yesterday," wrote Landor in December of that year, "a Mr. Moreton . . . read me a manuscript by Mr. Tennyson. . . . The subject is the death of Arthur. It is more Homeric than any poem of our time, and rivals some of the noblest parts of the *Odyssey*."—Forster, *Life of Landor*, II, 323.

It was published in *Poems, by Alfred Tennyson*, 1842. Twenty-seven years later, the *Morte d'Arthur* was taken from its pleasant personal setting in *The Epic* and became *The Passing of Arthur* of the *Idylls of the King*.

Theme, source, and treatment. The *Morte d'Arthur* rests upon Malory's *Morte Darthur*; more particularly it is founded upon chapters four and five of the twenty first book, of which the poem is, as we shall see, a close poetic rendering.

Its great theme, the passing away of a hero-king, mortally wounded by a traitorous knight, is rendered picturesquely—the battle-field among the wild mountains; the mysterious departure, god-like, yet fraught with the deepest pathos of imminent death; the vivid picture of Bedivere gazing after the lessening barge—this treatment of the theme leaves the reader, too, revolving many memories, in the elevation of mind arising from the contemplation of scenes of noble thought and heroic action.

The style, too, is clear, simple, and strong with its brief English words, and yet with a mournful melody, and with the finest onomatopœic effects.

"Not only in the language," says Bayne, "is it Homeric, but in the design and manner of treatment. The concentration of the interest on the hero, the absence of all modernism in the way of love-story or passion-painting, the martial clearness, terseness, brevity of the narrative with definite specification, at the same time, are exquisitely true to the Homeric pattern," p. 334. This, however, is exquisitely unfair to Malory; for in this early sketch Tennyson's treatment of his source is far nearer the original than the ornate versions in the subsequent *Idylls*, and every point that gives the poem its 'Homeric' character is exquisitely true of the poet's original. Illustrations of this will appear in our comparisons. Brimley (p. 243) speaks more nearly the truth: "They are rather Virgilian than Homeric echoes; elaborate and stately, not naïve and eager to tell their story; rich in pictorial detail; carefully studied; conscious of their own art; more anxious for beauty of workmanship than interest of action."

Metrical form. The verse is blank verse (unrimed five-accent, iambic lines), with characteristic Tennysonian modulations.

THE EPIC.

Setting. Like Boccaccio, Chaucer, William Morris, Tennyson uses to enhance the telling of the story a social group—here a gathering of friends at an English fireside on Christmas Eve.

Page 74. 1. 1.—the Christmas-eve. The old observances of Christmas are best read in Scott's *Marmion*, Introduction to Canto vi, and Washington Irving's *Sketch Book*.

1. 3.—sacred bush. Mistletoe, sacred among the Druids.

l. 4.—**wassail-bowl.** Punch-bowl. Wassail, revel. (A.S. *wes hal*, 'be hale,' here's to your health.)

l. 15.—**church-commissioners.** An allusion to the ecclesiastical commission appointed 1837 to secure a fair distribution of the duties and revenues of the Anglican Church and a greater efficiency. The administration of church property in England is vested in this commission.

Page 75. l. 28.—**epic.** A narrative poem in lofty style celebrating the deeds of a national hero or demi-god.

l. 36.—**Mastodon.** Extinct animal—elephant class.

l. 40.—**draff.** Refuse—especially refuse grain from breweries, lees.

ll. 50ff.—**Mouthing out his hollow oes.** This is the characteristic description of Tennyson's own way of reading—a chanting of the verse.

MORTE D'ARTHUR.

Title. Morte. Death. The more usual French is *mort*.

Arthur. Behind the Arthurian story, in which there still linger undeniable evidences, can be traced the outlines of a very considerable Celtic heathen mythology. Vaguely, it is true, but still visible in this heathen mythology appear the chief persons of the Arthurian legend: Arthur (*Arator*), god of ploughing; his wife Gwenhwyvar, goddess of the twilight; Medrawd, god of the shades, who carries off Gwenhwyvar and is warred on by Arthur. With Arthur was associated a younger sun-god, Gawain, whose strength was thrice increased at noon (Malory, *Morte Darthur*, iv, 18), while Merlin—Myrddin, Mordunjos, "of the sea-fort"—perhaps points to an older divinity of light who disappears in the western waves. One of Arthur's exploits is bringing off the cauldron of Hades, which according to Celtic legend had wonderful properties of feeding any company however large, though it would not cook for a coward, and of

restoring to life dead bodies thrown into it. Similarly Brân's head and the poisoned spear that killed him had magical properties, the former giving food to all who wished to partake. The obscurity and confusion into which this ancient mythology fell are due to two causes,—the advent of Christianity and the triumphant invasion of the English. The one deposed the old divinities, degrading them to the rank of something less than divine, yet more than human; the other set the Welsh poets aglow in patriotic praise of their war-leaders. One of these war-leaders in the years of struggle against the English invaders (450-510) was called ARTHUR. Fiction has so completely taken possession of the figure of Arthur that it is almost impossible to discern what historic truth still exists in the mass of fabulous details that have clustered around the British king. Either in South Britain or in North Britain or as *Comes Britanniae*, holding "a roving commission to defend the province wherever his presence might be called for"—for scholars are not agreed as to the scene of his exploits—Arthur, born towards the end of the fifth century, seems to have been for years a great military leader, opposing the heathen invaders, defeating them in twelve successive battles, and falling himself at Camlan in Cornwall, in battle against his rebellious kinsman Modred. Even in these details we seem to see traces of the mythological Arthur with whom the war-leader was soon confounded. And only by the supposition of this association of the exploits of the old Celtic god and the new Celtic hero can we explain the exceeding fame and renown of the later Arthur.

The legendary Arthur. Leaving out Welsh sources, there is no written record of Arthur till several centuries after his death. When his name for the first time occurs, he appears only as the successful leader of his nation in twelve great battles. This is in the *Historia Britonum* ascribed to Nennius, who lived in the last years of the

eighth century. Meanwhile, however, Celtic Britain had seized on his figure as the subject of song and story, and found in magnifying his great deeds of yore a compensation for the ignominy of their position before the English conquerors. No sooner had the Normans conquered England than they found a source of deep interest in the number and excellence of the British oards and in the fascinating novelty of their abundant native traditions. What was needed in order that these legends and traditions might become available for the cultivated world was their expression in a language more generally known than Welsh. The undying honour of giving such expression belongs to Geoffrey, a monk of Monmouth (near Gloucester), who died, bishop of St. Asaph, in 1154.

In three Latin works, especially in the *Historia Regum Britannie*, Geoffrey incorporated the legends and traditions he found at hand, and, though professing to make a translation of an old Gallic book, drew from his own imagination a systematic and detailed account of pretended kings of the Britons. Reaching the period of the struggles that followed the landing of the English, Geoffrey gave the reins to his fancy, wove about the meagre mention of Nennius's war-leader Arthur, a tale of a most marvellous and fascinating kind. Arthur, son of Uther Pendragon, becomes through his great military powers a world-king. Driving out the English from Britain, he conquers Scotland, Ireland, Norway, France, establishes a court that is the centre of chivalry, and is on the way to the capture of Rome when his nephew Modred, left as regent of England, rebels, seizes and marries Guanhumara (Guinevere), Arthur's wife. Arthur returning defeats and slays Modred, is himself mortally wounded, and is transported to the paradise of the heroic dead, Avalon, there to await the time of his triumphant return to this world.

Geoffrey's book is an epoch-making work. Seized upon

by the Anglo-Normans it was made the basis of numerous works in prose and verse of which those by Geoffrey Gaimar (1145) and the Guernseyman Wace (1155), who first mentions the *Table Ronde*, are the most important.

The work of Wace, which was a *Brut*, or history of the British kings as descended from Brutus of Troy, calls for especial note. Writing in French, at a time when French literature and civilization were beginning to dominate western Europe, Wace gave universal currency to the story of Geoffrey and a poetical form—the four-accent couplet—that served as a model to almost all the romances derived from it. It is from Wace that our own Layamon writes his *Brut*, the first Arthurian poem in the English language (1205, 1275).

Meanwhile the native songs of the Welsh bards were likewise passing into French, either directly or through English versions. Marie de France, who lived at the court of Henry II. of England, is the author of some fifteen of the most charming poems of old French literature, all based on Celtic lays. *Trist(r)an(m)*, the prince of war, hunting, and song, emerges from the bardic sources as early as 1150-1170 as the hero of exploits as fascinating as Arthur's, which were related in Anglo-French by Béroul and Thomas. Even in the earliest French account Tristan, who had originally nothing to do with Arthur, is joined to the number of Arthur's knights. This happens likewise with *Gawain*, who, originally the hero of independent exploits, is brought by the poets, swayed by the magic of Arthur's name, into the circle of the Round Table. Similarly *Percivale* (also in Welsh, *Peredur*), the hero of the Grail legend, seeks knighthood at the hands of Arthur and makes the king's court the starting point of his adventures. This accretion of originally independent stories around a common centre is, while not new in literature, one of the most interesting features of the Arthurian cycle.

It is impossible to enumerate the host of Arthurian romances that, growing from a French centre, filled the literature of Europe from Italy to Iceland. The *Morte Darthur* (1470) of Sir Thomas Malory, to which Tennyson was indebted, is the first great English compilation of these stories, gathered from French and English versions. Nor has there been any sign of death and decay in the personages of the poetical Arthurian world. Keeping only to English literature, we have the figure of Arthur a favourite popular theme of our old ballad literature. The *Misfortunes of Arthur* is one of the earliest of Elizabethan dramas. Spenser drew his inspiration and the material of his *Faerie Queen* largely from Arthurian poems. Milton in his earlier days planned an epic poem on Arthur. When the Romantic Revival of the closing years of the eighteenth century arose, the interest in mediæval literature and life which accompanied it and in part caused it, could not possibly pass Arthur by. Scott not only edited *Sir Tristrem* but wrote in his *Bridal of Triermain* a genuine Arthurian poem; Reginald Heber devoted himself to a *Morte Arthur* and a *Musque of Guendolen*; Peacock in his *Maid Marian* and *Misfortunes of Elphin* led the way to the modern treatment, the modern spiritualization of the ancient stories. Wordsworth was keenly sensitive to the charm of the old romantic poetry and wins from old tradition the story of *Artegall and Elidure*. This was in 1815. In 1832 Alfred Tennyson published *The Lady of Shalott*, and, still continuing and developing the subtle working over of the old poetic material into the new poetical spirit of his age, which is characteristic of the Romantic group, began a devotion to Arthurian literature that spans the whole great stretch of his poetical activity. The theme was in the air, everyone breathed its influence, no doubt, but still to Tennyson was chiefly owing the inspiration of the many contemporary poems on this theme: Lytton's *King*

Arthur, Matthew Arnold's *Tristram and Iseult*, William Morris's *Defence of Guenevere*, Lowell's *Sir Launfal*, Hawker's *Quest of the Sangraal*, Millard's *Tristram and Iseult*, Simcox's *Farewell of Ganore*, Swinburne's *Tristram of Lyonesse*, etc.

A tremendous and marvellous body of literature, the solace of centuries of human life, all growing, virtually, out of the work of an old monk who eight centuries ago in the quiet of a poor border monastery of west England imagined the glories of Arthur and his court !

Page 75. l. 52.—**So.** Suggesting a description already given in the "epic" of which this is supposed to be a fragment.

the noise of battle. Tennyson begins his story with the battle of Camlan, fought between Arthur and Modred, aided by the English invaders.

l. 53.—**Among the mountains**, etc. In Malory the battle was assigned "upon a down besides Salisbury, and not far from the seaside, and this day was assigned on a Monday after Trinity Sunday" (xxi, 3). In Geoffrey, it is by the river Cambula, in Cornwall.

In Tennyson, the scenic background is made to harmonize with the closing of Arthur's life. In the *Idylls*, the king comes on the night of the New Year, is married in May, and disappears with the ending of the year.

l. 54.—**Arthur's table.** According to Malory, the Table Round was given by Uther Pendragon to King Leodogran and by him, as dowry with his daughter Guinevere, to Arthur. With the Table went one hundred knights, though it required fifty more to be complete (iii, 1, but according to xxi, 13, always one hundred and forty completed it). Arthur fulfilled the number of knights, except that no one sat in the Siege Perilous. Merlin had made the Table "in tokening of the roundness of the world, for by the Round Table is the world signified by right"

(xiv, 2). For the description of the fair Order of the Round Table see *Guinevere*, ll. 460-473. The symbolism of the Table and the world is in ll. 285, 286.

by. After.

Page 76. l. 55.—**Lyonnesse.** Supposed to have been a tract of country between Land's End and the Scilly Isles. It apparently formed part of Cornwall, for Tristram of Liones in Malory is spoken of as a Cornish knight (ix, 15). It was submerged later, it was said, and lies "full forty fathoms under water," or as Tennyson says,

"A land of old upheaven from the abyss,
By fire, to sink into the abyss again."

l. 57.—**The bold Sir Bedivere.** In *The Coming of Arthur* we learn that Bedivere was,

"the first of all the knights
Knighted by Arthur at his crowning . . .
For bold in heart and act and word was he,
Whenever slander breathed against the king."

The epithet "bold," as in ll. 90, 120, etc., is a permanent epithet with Bedivere's name, independent of his state at any given moment, and indicates his characteristic virtue. It was so in Malory. Permanent epithets are frequent in Homer; "fleet-footed Achilles," "ægis-bearing Zeus," "wide-ruling Agamemnon," "swift ships," "unvintaged sea," etc.; they are also characteristic of the oldest English epic poetry: "Hrothgar, helmet of the Scyldings," "ringed ships," etc.

l. 58—**Sir Bedivere, the last.** In the *Idyll* this line is omitted, constituting the only change made in the lines of *Morte d'Arthur*.

In Malory two knights are left, Sir Lucan, Arthur's butler, and his brother, Sir Bedivere, both of them sore wounded. The two weakly led the wounded king to "a little chapel not far from the sea." Attempting again to carry the king, Lucan dies. The passage in Tennyson,

"Then spake King Arthur," etc. (ll. 64-89) is added by the poet.

l. 60—**chancel.** The part of the church railed in (L. *cancelli*, cross-bars) to contain the choir and altar.

l. 61—**strait.** A narrow passage of land, an isthmus—a Tennysonian sense developed from the word as applied to water, and as meaning a narrow pass. Cf.

"Honour travels in a strait so narrow
Where one but goes abreast."

—Shakspeare, *Troilus and Cressida*, III, iii, 151.

l. 63.—**a great water.** Mr. Brimley defends the phrase against probable charges of being an affected phraseology for "a great lake." "It marks," he says, "the appearance of a large lake outspread and taken in at one glance from a high ground." The truth is, "water" is still in use in the north for "lake," cf. Derwentwater; and was frequently used in Mid. Eng. for "river" or "sea." The advantage of the synonym is its indefiniteness, suggesting the expanse of water stretching away to undefined distance. Tennyson, no doubt, learnt the word from Malory, and used it likewise for its archaic character. Cf. "The king . . . saw afore him in a great water a little ship," etc.—Malory, iv, 6.

l. 6 —**The sequel of to-day.** The issue and result of to-day's events (Lat. *sequor*, I follow).

l. 67.—**Such a sleep.** Cf. Collins—

"How sleep the brave that sink to rest," etc.

l. 73. — **I perish by this people.** The pathos of this is given an additional touch in the passage prefixed in *The Passing of Arthur*—

"Ill doom is mine
To war against my people and my knights.
The king who fights his people fights himself.
And they my knights, who loved me once, the stroke
That strikes them dead is as my death to me."

Arthur had made his people when he

"Drew all their petty principedoms under him,
Their king and head, and made a realm and reigned."

—*The Coming of Arthur.*

Merlin sware . . . rule once more. In the romances, Merlin was a devil's son, the offspring of a demon and a nun. According to one account, the devil thought to frustrate by Merlin's birth the scheme of Christ's incarnation; but the child was baptized by Bleys, and his thoughts, which had all the wisdom of the serpent, were turned to the service of Arthur and of good. Henry of Huntingdon (1139) chronicles the common British belief that Arthur did not die but that the Britons "solemnly expect his return." Geoffrey of Monmouth also: "Arthur himself was mortally wounded, and being thence carried to the isle of Avallon to be cured of his wounds" (xi, 2). Wace (l. 13681ff.) wrote: "Arthur, if the story lies not, was mortally wounded in the body; he had himself borne to Avalon to heal his wounds. There he is still, the Britons await him, as they say and understand . . . Merlin said of Arthur that his end would be doubtful. The prophet spoke truth, and one can doubt, and always will doubt, whether he is dead or living." So, too, Layamon (B. l. 23052ff.), tr. Madden: "Of this king's death will no Briton believe it, except it be at the last day, at the great doom, . . . for he himself said to his good Britons . . . that he would fare into Avalon, into the island, to Argante, the fair; for she should with balm heal his wounds; and when he were all whole he would soon come again to them here." In Malory his tomb is inscribed: "Hic jacet Arthurus Rex quondam Rexque futurus" (xxi, 7). Cf.

"On Caer-Eryri's highest found the King,
A naked babe, of whom the Prophet spake,
'He passes to the Isle Avillon,
He passes and is heal'd and cannot die.'"

—*Gareth and Lynette.*

The "sleep" of Arthur associates the British story with the similar stories of Charlemagne and Friedrich Barbarossa in Germany, Brian in Ireland, Bohadil el Chico in Spain, etc.

1. 78.—**Excalibur.** Excalibur (Malory, i, 7) was so bright in the enemies' eyes, it gave light like thirty torches. It was always customary among the Teutons and Celts to give names to their choicest weapons. The name Excalibur is of Celtic origin, meaning "cut steel." How Arthur obtained the sword is narrated in *The Coming of Arthur*.

"The sword

That rose from out the bosom of the lake,
And Arthur rowed across and took it—rich
With jewels, elfin Urim, on the hilt,
Bewildering heart and eye—the blade so bright
That men are blinded by it—on one side,
Graven in the oldest tongue of all this world,
'Take me,' but turn the blade and ye shall see,
And written in the speech ye speak yourself,
"Cast me away!"

1. 82.—**samite.** The word samite is a favourite one in all the Arthurian romances, which betray the Middle Age liking for gorgeous dress. It is a rich silk-stuff, of various colours. Red, it served as robe for the king at his coronation (*Coming of Arthur*); white, as the dress of the Lady of the Lake (*id.*); black, as the pall of Elaine's funeral barge (*Lancelot and Elaine*). (Fr. *samit*, from L. *examitum*, from Gk. *ex*, six, *mitos*, thread.)

Page 77. 1. 87.—**But now delay not, etc.** In Malory, as Sir Lucan dies, the king says: "But my time hieth fast. Therefore take thou Excalibur, my good sword, and go with it to yonder water side, and when thou comest there, I charge thee throw my sword in that water, and come again, and tell me what thou there seest. My lord, said Bedevere, your commandment shall be done, and lightly bring you word again" (xxi, 5).

l. 88. —**middle mere.** Middle of the mere. An archaic construction, once common in English. It occurs frequently in Tennyson:—

“The living airs of middle night.”

—*Arabian Nights*, 69.

The construction in Tennyson has been called, and no doubt rightly, a classicism (cf. *in medio mari*, in the mid sea = in the middle of the sea); but expressions such as *middel wei*, midway; *middel niht*, midnight, are common in Mid. Eng., and *be midelen strāme*, in mid stream, is in Anglo-Saxon.

mere. A.S. *mere*, sea, lake; hence Mid. Eng. and Mod. Eng. *mere*, lake. (Cf. *mer*-maid.)

l. 89.—**lightly.** Nimble, actively, and so quickly; so used in Malory and Spenser.

l. 91.—**meet.** Fitting; cf. Luke xv, 32. (Mid. Eng. *mete*, A.S. *gemet*, fit or suitable, connected with *metan*, to measure.)

l. 94.—**hest.** Command. (A.S. *hæst*, command.)

l. 96.—**from the ruined shrine, etc.** “With what distinctness, with what force and conciseness of language, is the whole scene of the churchyard, with its associations, brought before the mind: its ancestral relics, the ruins of the chapel, the piercing cold of the night-wind edged with sea-salt, the sharp rocks down which the path to the sea descends.”—Brimley, p. 243f.

l. 97.—**Athwart.** Through and across.

l. 102.—**the shining levels.** Cf. L. *arguora*; but here the phrase arises from Bedivere seeing the lake from the low margin, not, as before, from the crags.

l. 103.—**There drew he forth, etc.** “So Bedivere departed, and by the way he beheld that noble sword, that the pommel and haft were all of precious stones, and then he said to himself, If I throw this rich sword in the water, thereof shall never come good, but harm and loss. And then Sir Bedivere hid Excalibur under a tree. And

as soon as he might he came again unto the king, and said he had been at the water, and had thrown the sword into the water. What sawest thou there? said the king. Sir, he said, I saw nothing but waves and winds. That is untruly said of thee, said the king; therefore go thou lightly again, and do my command as thou art to me lief and dear, spare not, but throw it in" (xxi, 5).

l. 106.—**keen with frost.** (l. because of the frosty air.

l. 107.—**diamond sparks.** Until 1853 this read "diamond studs."

l. 108.—**topaz lights.** Gleams from the facets of the jewels. The topaz (*tō'paz*) is a precious stone, usually colourless, but at times yellow, white, green, or pale-blue in colour.

jacinth work. Embossed with jacinths, that is with hyacinths. The hyacinth among the ancients was a gem of bluish-violet colour, supposed to be the sapphire; to-day the name is applied to a reddish-orange gem. (*Jacinth* is only a form of *iacinth*, which is O. Fr. *hyacinthe*, from L. *hyacinthus*, Gr. *iakinthos*, hyacinth (plant) or sapphire (gem).)

l. 111.—**dividing the swift mind.** He reviews and considers, rapidly turning his mind to all different courses of action. The sentence is rendered from the Latin,

"Atque animū nunc huc celerem, nunc dividit illuc."

Virgil, *Æneid*, iv, 285, viii, 20.

"And he divides the swift mind, now this way, now that."

l. 112.—**in act to throw.** On the point of, in the very process of. The construction is imitated from the Latin *in actu*. Pope is among the first to use it, as in

"Atides then his massy lance prepares
In act to throw, but first prefers his prayers."

—*Iliad*, iii.

l. 114.—**many-knotted waterflags.** The waterflag or yellow flag or iris or fleur-de-luce, grows in shallows or

by the margin, blossoming on a stem sometimes three feet high, amidst its green sword-blade leaves. The epithet "many-knotted" is difficult to explain. The possible explanations would refer the description to (1) the root-stock of the flag which shows additional bulbs from year to year; (2) or, the joints in the flower stalks of which some half-dozen may be found on each stalk; (3) or, the large seed-pods that terminate the stalks, a very noticeable feature when the plant is sere; (4) the various bunches or knots of iris in a bed of the plants. The whole phrase suggests a thickly matted bed of flags.

Page 78. l. 115.—*marge*. A poetical word, margin. (Fr. *marge*, Lat. *margo*, border, margin.)

l. 116.—**So strode he back slow**. Notice the heaping up of consonants, rendering necessary the slow movement of the line.

l. 121.—**the ripple washing**, etc. Notice the accuracy of the description of the sounds of water, "the two phrases marking exactly the difference of sound produced by water swelling up against a permeable or impermeable barrier."—Brimley, p. 241f. Cf. l. 167f., and the original suggestion in Malory (note, l. 132), "the waters wap (beat) and the waves wan (? moan). The noise is heard both of mere and ocean.

l. 124.—**thy nature and thy name**. "Thy disposition and thy name of knight (cf. Malory, "thou art named a noble knight"). Sir Bedivere, we can see from *The Coming of Arthur*, was valiant and sincere, taking the plain, practical, honest view of life, and ready to fight to his utmost for it. His practical though narrow nature seems revealed throughout this poem. Tennyson may have some reference in this line to the name "Bedivere," as if connected with *L. verus*, true.

l. 126.—**fealty**. Fidelity to a lord, usually assured in a feudal system by an oath. (O. Fr. *féalté*, *L. fidelitas*.)

l. 131.—**lief**. Beloved, an archaic word. (A.S. *lēof*, dear; connected with *lufu*, love, etc.)

l. 132.—**Then went Sir Bedivere**, etc. "Then Sir Bedivere returned again, and took the sword in his hand, and him thought (it seemed to him) sin and shame to throw away that noble sword, and returned again, and told to the king that he had been at the water, and done his commandment. What saw thou there? said the king. Sir, said he, I saw nothing but the waters wap and the waves wan. Ah traitor, untrue, said king Arthur, now hast thou betrayed me twice. Who would have wend (supposed) that thou that hast been so lief and dear, and thou art named a noble knight, and would betray me for the riches of the sword. But now go again lightly, for thy long tarrying putteth me in great jeopardy of my life, for I have taken cold. And but if thou do not now as I bid thee, if ever I may see thee, I shall slay thee with mine own hands, for thou wouldest for my rich sword see me dead" (xxi, 5).

l. 135.—**Counting the dewy pebbles**. It is often noticed that when in deep thought the mind seeks some trifling occupation of a mechanical nature, which seems to aid abstraction.

l. 137.—**chased**. Engraved.

l. 141.—**Should**. Should, not would, to indicate the inevitable consequence of the act.

Page 79. l. 145.—**bond of rule**. The bond that makes government possible.

l. 150.—**empty breath . . . doubt**. Mere talk and tradition about Arthur and his deeds, which lacking material proof, would pass into myth and fable.

l. 155.—**maiden of the Lake**. In some romances she is called Vivien, but Tennyson keeps apart the Circe-like Vivien, who wrought Merlin's ruin, and that good

power that supported Arthur, the Lady of the Lake. She symbolizes Religion ; her waving dress, its changing forms ; the sacred fish is emblematic of Christ ; the sword typifies divine justice ; the incense, holiness, etc. The Lady of the Lake was present at the Coronation of Arthur. It was she who gave him Excalibur. Her dwelling was

"Down in a deep ; calm, whatsoever storms
May shake the world, and when the surface rolls,
Hath power to walk the waters like our Lord."

—*The Coming of Arthur.*

1. 161.—**conceit.** What he falsely conceived. The sense here is nearer the original one of thought.

1. 163.—**And so strode back.** Cf. l. 116 ; the repetition of characteristic phrases has been noted as Homeric.

1. 172.—**Authority forgets a dying king.** A noble line, which Mr. Brimley calls "thoroughly Shaksperian." Of the passage he says : "The personification assists the imagination without distressing the understanding, as when dwelt upon, and expanded in detail ; deepening the impressiveness of the sentiment by giving along with a true thought a grand picture—just such a passing flash of impassioned rhetoric as would become the highest oratory."—p. 245.

It has been suggested that the line is made from a passage in Lingard, vi, 316, when speaking to the dying Elizabeth "Cecil intimated that she must go to bed. . . . 'Must !' she exclaimed ; 'is *must* a word to be addressed to princes ? Little man, little man . . . thou hast grown presumptuous because thou knowest that I shall die.'"

1. 173.—**Laid widow'd, etc.** Hopelessly bereft.

Page 80. 1. 176.—**offices.** The services it was the duty of the knights to tender. (*L. officium*, duty.)

1. 179.—**giddy.** Light, frivolous, foolish ; cf. Shakspeare's

"Man is a giddy thing."

—*Much Ado*, v, iv.

l. 182.—**spare.** Omit, refrain from.

l. 184.—**Then quickly rose,** etc. “Then Sir Bedivere departed, and went to the sword and lightly took it up, and went to the water side, and then he bound the girdle about the hilts, and then he threw the sword as far into the water as he might, and there came an arm and an hand above the water, and met it, and caught it, and so shook it thrice and brandished, and then vanished away the hand with the sword into the water. So Sir Bedivere came again to the king and told him what he saw. Alas, said the king, help me hence, for I dread me I have tarried over long. Then Sir Bedivere took the king upon his back, and so went with him to that water side” (XXI, 5).

l. 188.—**Made lightnings,** etc. “A series of brilliant effects is hit off in these two words, ‘made lightnings.’ ‘Whirl’d in an arch,’ is a splendid instance of sound answering to sense . . . ; the additional syllable which breaks the measure and necessitates an increased rapidity of utterance, seeming to express to the ear the rush of the sword up its parabolic curve. And with what lavish richness of presentative power are the boreal aurora, the collision, the crash, and the thunder of the meeting icebergs brought before the eye.”—Brimley, p. 245.

l. 190.—**northern morn.** The aurora borealis, brightest in the extreme north.

l. 191.—**isles of winter shock.** Icebergs crash together. A characteristic illustration of Tennyson’s avoidance of the literal expression ; cf. l. 266.

l. 195.—**he.** The same personal affection appears here that leads men to give names to their machines, their ships, etc.

dipt the surface. Went under the surface,—an unusual sense.

l. 199.—**thicker breath.** The breathing grows more difficult as death draws near.

l. 200.—**Now see I by thine eyes.** “How dramatic and striking is King Arthur’s sudden exclamation.”—Brimley, p. 245.

Page 81. l. 207.—**miracle.** Cf. “wonder,” l. 136.

l. 217.—**wound hath taken cold.** See note, ll. 132, 244; been exposed to the cold air, and so contracted a greater inflammation.

l. 219.—**Slowly, with pain, etc.** Notice the effect of the cæsuras.

l. 220.—**looking wistfully. . . . As in a picture.** The distant fixed gaze of the dying is here beautifully caught. The expression is from Æschylus, *Agamemnon*, l. 230ff. “Each of her sacrificers, she smote with a piteous glance, standing out conspicuous as in a picture.” Cf.

“So like a painted battle the war stood
Silenced.

—*The Coming of Arthur.*

l. 222.—**Remorsefully.** Piteously. “Remorse” has here a meaning, once common, of pity, as in Shakspeare—

“Thou’lt show thy pity and remorse more strange
Than is thy strange apparent cruelty.”

—*Merchant of Venice*, IV, i, 20.

l. 228.—**nightmare.** An incubus, a monster conceived as oppressing sleepers. (A.S. *marre*, hence not connected with *mearh*, horse, steed, Mod. Eng. *mare*.)

l. 233.—**Clothed with his breath.** His breath steamed about him like a cloak, in the chill winter air. So King Arthur in the mists at Almesbury:

“The moony vapour rolling round the King,
Who seem’d the phantom of a Giant in it,
Enwound him fold by fold, and made him gray
And grayer, till himself became a mist
Before her moving to his doom.”

Guinevere.

Page 82. l. 235.—**a cry.** See l. 250. The throwing in of Excalibur had been the warning of the King’s fate to the three Queens.

l. 236.—**His own thought.** Remorse for disobedience, and fear of its evil consequence.

l. 237.—**Dry clash'd.** Dry is here sharply, distinctly, clearly ringing: cf. *The Voyage*, l. 10. This sense is adopted from the classics; as in, "Their helms rang dry (*αὖρον*) and their bossy shields, being smitten with mighty stones,"—*Iliad*, XII, 160f., etc.

The passage (ll. 237-243) merits the most careful study for the suggestions of meaning by metrical means, and should be compared with ll. 99-102 and note. Mr. Brimley (p. 346) says of it: "Do we not seem to burst from the narrow steep path down the ravine, whose tall precipitous sides hide the sky and the broad landscape from sight, and come out in a moment upon

‘The level lake

And the long glories of the winter moon’?"

l. 243.—**long glories.** The moon was full (l. 63) and low in the sky, the reflection was therefore a long lane of fire.

l. 244.—**there hove a dusky barge,** etc. "And when they were at the water side, even fast by the bank hove a little barge, with many fair ladies in it, and among them all was a queen, and all they had black hoods, and all they wept and shrieked when they saw king Arthur. Now put me into the barge, said the king: and so he did softly. And there received him three queens with great mourning, and so they set him down, and in one of their laps king Arthur laid his head, and then that queen said, Ah, dear brother, why have ye tarried so long from me? Alas, this wound on your head hath caught over much cold. And so they rowed from the land; and Sir Bedivere beheld all those ladies go from him. Then Sir Bedivere cried, Ah, my lord Arthur, what shall become of me now ye go from me, and leave me here alone among mine enemies. Comfort thyself, said the king, and do as well as thou mayst, for in me is no trust for to trust in. For I will into the vale of Avilion, to heal me of my grievous

wound. And if thou hear never more of me, pray for my soul. But ever the queens and the ladies wept and shrieked, that it was pity to hear. And as soon as Sir Bedivere had lost the sight of the barge, he wept and wailed, and so took to the forest."—Malory, *xxi*, 5.

"He would be a bold critic who should pronounce that Tennyson has improved this . . . Tennyson's elaborate beauties command our admiration. Malory's simple words go straight to the heart."—Collins, p. 156f.

hove. For hove in sight.

1. 246. —**ware.** An archaic use of ware, which in modern usage is restricted to the compound beware. In Malory it was used with any part of the verb to be: "He was ware of a house," *xiv*, 3, etc.

1. 248. —**Black-stoled.** Dressed in long black robes. (Gk. *stole*, a long robe.)

1. 249. —**Three Queens.** Tennyson in *The Coming of Arthur* allegorized the three queens as faith, hope, and charity. Malory goes on from the chapter just quoted to mention them by name:—"That one was king Arthur's sister, Morgan le Fay; the other was the queen of North-galis (Wales); the third was the queen of the Waste Lands. Also there was Nimue, the chief Lady of the lake" (*xxi*, 6). Not wishing to break the mystery of Arthur's passing, Tennyson says nothing of this, or of the queens taking him to be buried, or of Bedivere coming upon a chapel in which was his new-made grave, though "the hermit knew not in certain that he was verily the body of king Arthur."

1. 250. —**shiver'd.** Went vibrating (with grief); a poetical sense. Shiver meaning vibrate is found likewise in,

"Consonant chords that shiver to one note."

—*The Princess*, *III*.

to the tingling stars. Till the stars heard it and thrilled with pain. Mr. Brimley defends the exaggeration: "The cry comes from a company of spirits, amid mountains

whose natural powers of echo is heightened by the silence of night, the clearness of the winter air, and the hardening effect of frost," p. 246.

l. 253.—**where no one comes**, etc. "The shrillness of the wind could not be greater in an uninhabited place . . . but the mournfulness of the feeling man would experience in such a place, is blended with the naturally sad wail."—Brimley, p. 246.

Page 83. l. 265.—**the springing east.** The rising sun. The use of spring with the sunrise is in Anglo-Saxon.

l. 266.—**greaves.** Armour for the shins. (O.F. *greve*, shank, shin.) Cf.

"Around
His manly legs with silver buckles bound
The clasping greaves." —Pope, *Iliad*, xvi.

cuisses. Armour for the thighs. (Fr. *cuissare*, thigh.)

drops of onset. Blood. Cf. *The Princess*, v, 157.

"Though dashed with death,
He reddens what he kisses."

l. 267.—**light and lustrous curls**, etc. Cf. the description of Arthur, in *The Last Tournament* :—

"That victor of the Pagan throned in hall,
His hair, a sun that rayed from off a brow
Like hill-snow high in heaven, the steel-blue eyes,
The golden beard that clothed his lips with light."

And in *The Coming of Arthur*,

"This king is fair
Beyond the race of Britons and of men."

l. 271.—**the knightly growth**, etc. "Virgil's good taste would have preserved him from such extravagances as 'the knightly growth,' etc., for a moustache."—Collins, p. 11.

l. 274.—**a star of tournament.** In later poems Tennyson revised this conception of Arthur,

"For Lancelot was the first in Tournament
But Arthur mightiest on the battle-field."
—Gareth and Lynette.

See also *Lancelot and Elaine*, 311ff.

l. 275.—**Shot.** Like a star.

l. 279.—**my forehead and my eyes.** Epic definiteness for face.

l. 283.—**the light that led**, etc. Cf. l. 274 and Matt. II, 7ff.

l. 285.—**the whole Round Table**, etc. See note, l. 54.

Page 84. l. 291.—**The old order changeth**, etc. This is the theme of the poem. Rome had yielded to Arthur in Britain; now the king must give up Excalibur for other hands to wield, must pass away from earthly sovereignty, yielding place to other instruments of God's ruling providence.

"Our little systems have their day;

They have their day and cease to be:

They are but broken lights of thee,

And thou, O Lord, art more than they."

—*In Memoriam*, Introd.

"Sir Bedivere hears the king give his last message to the world. It is the modern Christian who speaks, but the phrases do not sound out of harmony with that which might be in Romance."—Stopford Brooke, p. 390.

l. 294.—**What comfort is in me.** As a king bereft of people and mortally wounded, how can I help thee?

l. 296.—**May he within Himself**, etc. "May God accept my work and, absorbing it, as it were, into himself, purify it."—Rowe-Webb. I think, however, that Arthur prays that, as he has done his work as an instrument of God, it should now be cleared of faults and enter into the divine plan whereby

"God fulfils himself in many ways."

l. 300.—**Rise like a fountain.** This thought is iterated in

"Prayer . . .

Like fountains of sweet water in the sea."

—*Enoch Arden*.

l. 302.—**a blind life.** A life acting without intelligence.

1. 305.—**every way.** On all sides.

1. 306.—**earth . . . Bound by gold chains.** This beautiful thought is not Tennyson's. A rough suggestion lies in Homer, *Iliad*, viii: "Fasten ye a rope of gold from heaven . . . yet could ye not drag Zeus from heaven to earth . . . but were I minded to draw with all my heart, then should I draw you up with very earth and sea withal . . . and so should all those things be hung in air." Chaucer has "the fayre cheyne of love," *Knight's Tale*, 2133; Bacon, "the highest link of nature's chain must needs be tied to the foot of Jupiter's chair," *Adv. of Learning*, 1. In Milton the world is attached to the universe by a golden chain,

"And fast by, hanging in a golden chain
This pendent world."

—*Paradise Lost*, II.

So Ben Jonson, Dryden, etc. But Tennyson's immediate source is Archdeacon Hare's sermon on *The Law on Self-Sacrifice*: "This is the golden chain of love, whereby the whole creation is bound to the throne of the Creator."

1. 309.—**clouded with a doubt.** This represents not so much Tennyson's doubt of the future life, as Arthur's own vague doubt of Avalon, having only Merlin's prophecy for warrant.

1. 310.—**Avilion.** In Celtic mythology, the earthly paradise was a green island of the blest, far away beneath the setting sun. There lived the great heroes like Arthur, in the midst of an orchard of magic apples (*arlan*) within the sound of the waters of a mystic fountain. The Middle Ages attempted to localize Avalon on the river Brue or Bret in Somersetshire, a place famous for its fairies and Druids. This association is probably due to the association of the Grail story with Glastonbury (twenty-five miles south-west of Bath, on the river Brue), where according to tradition King Arthur and Queen Guinevere were buried.

While an "island" in the river it would lie in the valley of the stream; hence "island-valley." Malory speaks of it now as the "isle" and again as the "vale" of "Avelion," "Avelon," "Avilion."

The very latest theory makes Avalon not originally the island of apples (Welsh *aval*, apple) but the isle of king Avallon, who may be regarded as a Celtic divinity associated with darkness and death.—Rhys, *Studies*, etc.

l. 311.—**Where falls not hail, etc.** This is almost literally the Middle Age conception of Avalon. It resembles somewhat that of the Elysium; see *Odyssey*, vi, 42ff. Compare, too, *Lucretius*,

"The Gods, who haunt
The lucid interspace of world and world,
Where never creeps a cloud, or moves a wind,
Nor falls the least white star of snow," etc.

l. 313.—**deep-meadow'd.** Meadows on which the grass is deep. It is from (Gk. *βαθύλειμος*, in Homer, *Iliad*, ix, 151 (Rowe-Webb).

happy. Luxuriant, blooming; cf. smiling, in

"To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land."

—Gray, *Elegy*.

And Virgil's "*letas segetes*," happy harvest.

l. 314.—**Crown'd with summer sea.** Sloping down to the rippling sea, the waters of which like a crystal coronet circle at the horizon. So Homer, "The island crowned about with the circle of the endless sea," *Odyssey*, x, 195; Tennyson, "the marriage ring of the land," *Maud*, iv, etc.

l. 317.—**like some full-breasted swan, etc.** The myth of the sweet song of the swan before death is frequently found among the classical writers, who made the bird sacred to Apollo; so Pliny, *Nat. Hist.*, p. 23: "Swans, shortly before their death, sing most sweetly"; cf. Shakespeare, *Merchant of Venice*, III, ii, 44, and Tennyson's poem *The Dying Swan*.

The swan is not musical, but its rare low notes are said to resemble "the tones of a violin, though somewhat higher" (Nicol).

- l. 318.—**fluting**. Singing softly with flute-like notes.

Page 85. l. 319.—**ruffles**, etc. The swan often half raises his wings in swimming; cf. Wordsworth's picture of the bird,—

"Fashioned his neck into a goodly curve;
An arch thrown back between luxuriant wings
Of whitest garniture."

—Dion.

pure cold. Snowy white. Wordsworth compares the swan's plumage to

"A flaky weight of winter's purest snows."

—Dion.

plume. Feathers, especially of the wings.

- l. 320.—**swarthy webs**. Black webbed feet.

l. 321.—**revolving many memories**. This phrase is the Latin "*multa animo revolvens*," revolving many things in his mind.

- l. 334.—**The lusty bird**, etc. So in Shakspeare,

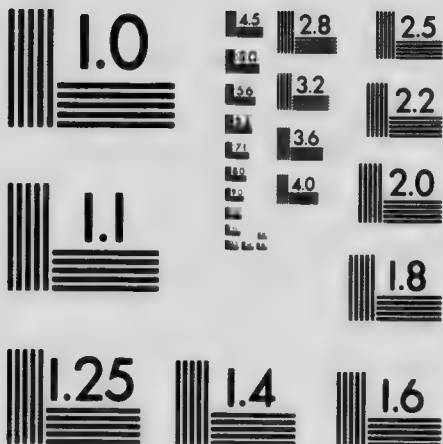
"Some say, that ever 'gainst that season comes
Wherein our Saviour's birth was celebrated,
This bird of dawning singeth all night long."

—*Hamlet*, I, I, 158f.

l. 340.—**looming**. A picturesque word, "appearing distinctly, as rising above the horizon or clouded by mist."

l. 345.—**Arthur, like a modern gentleman**. "Arthur as the modern gentleman, as the modern ruler of men, such a ruler as one of our Indian heroes on the frontier, is the main thing in Tennyson's mind, and his conception of such a man contains his ethical lesson to his countrymen."
—Stopford Brooke, p. 377.





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“BREAK, BREAK, BREAK.”

Composition and publication. It is an instance of the genesis of poetry that this poem should have been “made in a Lincolnshire lane at five o’clock in the morning between blossoming hedges” (*Tennyson Memoir*, I, 190). It was published in *Poema*, by Alfred Tennyson, 1842.

Theme and treatment. The poem, through its association with Arthur Hallam (see Introduction I.), may be regarded as a prelude to *In Memoriam*.

The theme—a lament for a lost friend—is rendered with all the associations of the seaside that are in keeping (similar or contrasting) with the mood of the speaker. These objects should be visualized and their symbolic value in the picture realized.

Metrical form. The poem is made up of four-line stanzas of which the second and fourth lines rhyme. The general movement is anapestic; the measure is greatly varied by the omission of an unaccented syllable, especially in the last foot, and in lines 1, 13 by the omission of all unaccented syllables, which are represented by the time interval between the accents. Note that the third line of the third and fourth stanzas has four accents instead of the normal three.

Page 86. l. 9. —stately. Suggesting the ocean-going vessel, returning after a long cruise, reuniting friends.

THE VOYAGE.

First publication. *The Voyage* was first published in the volume entitled *Enoch Arden*, 1864, which contained, as well, *Aylmer’s Field* and *The Northern Farmer*. The only differences from the present edition are unimportant variations in the punctuation.

Theme and treatment. Professor Palgrave (p. 251) regards the poem as an Allegory: “Life as energy, in the great ethical sense of the word,—Life as the pursuit of

the Ideal,—is figured in this brilliantly-descriptive allegory." Stopford Brooke adds to this, words that emphasize "the wild attraction of the deep sea," that we meet, as well, in *The Sailor Boy* and *Ulysses*. "It lives," he says, "in *The Voyage*, that delightful poem, with its double meaning, half of the life on the sea, and half of the life of the soul, and wholly of those who, like seamen, have no care for business and science and the real world; who race after the undiscovered shore, who follow the gleam, who live for ideas, not for things . . . With his turn for truth, for writing of only what he had observed, Tennyson does not take us into the deep ocean, save in one stanza of *In Memoriam*, in *The Voyage*, and in a few scattered lines. He rarely goes beyond the edge of the cliff or margin of the beach," p. 405f.

On its spiritual side, Mr. Brooke takes *The Voyage* with *Merlin and the Gleam*, *The Voice and the Peak*, *The Two Voices* as "poems inflamed with the spirit that pursues after the perfection of beauty." Tennyson threw, he says, "the passion of his spiritual pursuit into a different form in *The Voyage*; painting this aspiration in those that feel it with too much lightness of character, as if it were only a gay love of youth; yet who never turned aside from it—the happy tribe who know not the unrelenting strife, the serious passion, or the awful vision of the unapproachable loveliness, which are the badge and the burden of the greater artists,"—p. 505f.

The spirit and fire of the Englishman's love of the sea are depicted in *The Voyage* in a way that vividly recalls *The Ancient Mariner*.

Metrical form. The stanza is a double quatrain, of four-accent iambic lines with alternate rimes *a b a b, c d c d*.

Page 87. l. 1.—the painted buoy. Cf. *Gareth and Lynette*,

"The buoy that rides at sea, and dips and springs
For ever."

l. 6.—**main.** The expanse of ocean; an abbreviation from the main (chief) sea.

l. 10.—**Dry.** See note, *Morte d'Arthur*, l. 237.

l. 11.—**Lady's head.** An ornamental figure or bust is usually placed at the ship's head, under the bowsprit, especially with sailing vessels, called the figure-head. Here the figure-head is carved to represent the Virgin.

l. 12.—**shrill salt.** The salt wave dashing against the prow.

sheer'd. An old spelling of "shear," to cut through. They were sailing with the head well up to the wind.

l. 16.—**seem'd to sail,** etc. The plunging ship would rise bow-clear, as if to journey to the sun, towards which, sailing south, it was pointed.

l. 18.—**the threshold of the night.** This idea of the threshold, gates, etc., of the west is very old in literature.

l. 19.—**Ocean-lane of fire,** etc. Cf.

"Like a lane of beams athwart the sea."

—*The Golden Year.*

l. 21f.—**purple-skirted robe,** etc. The purple of the evening sky gradually dropping over the west as the yellow sunset faded.

l. 23.—**slumber of the globe.** Darkness.

Page 88. l. 31.—**boss.** Convex projection in the centre of a shield.

l. 32.—**Of her own halo,** etc. The bright moon was seen through mist, surrounded with a "ring" or "halo" (the "shield").

l. 33.—**shifted.** Changed.

l. 40.—**nutmeg rocks . . . spice.** Tropical islands of the East or West Indies covered with nutmeg-trees or clove-trees.

l. 41.—**peaks that flamed.** Burning volcanoes.

l. 42.—**Gloom'd.** Were darkly visible. For "to

gloom," as "to be darkly visible," cf. "gloom-ing." Tennyson was fond of the word, and used it frequently.

"I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance."

—*The Brook*, 101, 24.

Quivering. Responsive to subterranean commotion.

l. 43.—**ashy rains.** The cloud of volcanic ashes, shading the low coast, spread out in the heavens in shape like a plume or a pine-tree. The appearance of Vesuvius in eruption is like a vast black pine-tree.

l. 45.—**floods.** Rivers.

l. 46.—**scudded.** The verb *skud*, to run or move swiftly, is the Danish *skyde*, and is the same word as A.S. *scēotan*, Mod. Eng. *shoot*.

l. 50.—**stream'd.** Moving swiftly.

l. 51.—**burn'd . . . with wakes of fire.** Referring to the phosphorescent gleam of the sea (or more properly the animalculæ in the sea) particularly noticeable in the waves the ship sends out as she ploughs the waters.

l. 53.—**carven craft,** etc. The naked natives of southern islands put out to passing ships to barter flowers and fruit.

l. 56.—**nor . . . nor.** Neither . . . nor—a poetic order and a poetic phrase.

Page 89. l. 62.—**fixt.** With gaze intent on. The figure is that of the Ideal, the infinite progress possible for man. Cf. *By an Evolutionist, Old Age*.

"As he stands on the heights of his life with a glimpse of a height that is higher."

l. 67ff.—**Like Fancy,** etc. The highest object of desire appearing now to be the powers of imagination, now the familiar virtues.

l. 69.—**high on waves . . . crown'd the sea.** Suggesting Hope as the arch of the rainbow, the "bow of promise."

l. 71.—**the bloodless point.** Cf. *The Poet*, l. 41.

l. 73.—**one among us.** Representing the cynical and pessimistic side of the human mind.

l. 84.—**laws of nature, etc.** That is, they held the spirit more than the flesh, more powerful than material laws, seeing they had the strength to penetrate through all obstacles in their pursuit of the Ideal.

Page 90. l. 87.—**whirlwind's heart of peace.** In rotary storms such as the cyclone and hurricane the air whirls around a central stretch of calm.

l. 88.—**counter.** Contrary, opposed to them.

l. 91.—**Now mate is blind, etc.** The voyage of life is drawing to a close; they are growing old, 'tis time to take in sail; but the yearning never dies, the quest never ceases out of their spirit, for

"We may sail for evermore."

IN THE VALLEY OF CAUTERETZ.

Composition and publication. "On August 6th (1861), my father's birthday, we arrived at Caunteretz—his favorite valley in the Pyrenees. Before our windows we had a torrent rushing over its rocky bed from far away among the mountains, and falling in cataracts. Patches of snow lay on the peaks above, and nearer were the great wooded heights glorious with autumnal colors, bare rocks here and there, and greenest mountain meadows below. He wrote his lyric 'All along the Valley' after hearing the voice of the torrent seemingly sound deeper as the night grew."—*Tennyson Memoir*, I, 474.

Tennyson said of his poem: "Caunteretz, which I had visited with my friend before I was twenty (see note to *Ænone*), had always lived in my recollections as a sort of Paradise; when I saw it once more it had become a rather odious watering place, but the hills wore their old green, and the roaring stream had the same echoes as of old.

Altogether, I like the little piece as well as anything I have written."—*Id.*, I, 491.

It was published in the *Enoch Arden* volume, 1864.

The theme. The inter-relation of human life and nature through the suggestive power of aspects of nature. Compare the Bugle Song in *The Princess*, and *Break, break, break*.

Metrical form. The lines are six-accent trochaic, with many irregularities.

Page 90.—Title. Cauteretz, or Cauterets (*kô ter ay'*), a village of France, in the Pyrenees.

1. 6.—**two and thirty.** "My father was vexed that he had written 'two-and-thirty-years ago' in his 'All along the Valley' instead of 'one-and-thirty-years ago,' and as late as 1892 wished to alter it, since he hated inaccuracy. I persuaded him to let his first reading stand, for the public had learnt to love the poem in its present form: and besides 'two-and-thirty' was more melodious."—*Tennyson Memoir*, I, 491.



"Aldworth," Tennyson's home, Haslemere, Surrey.

POEMS BY ROBERT BROWNING.

CAVALIER TUNES.

Composition and publication. *Bells and Pomegranates* (see Introduction, p. xli) opened its third serial number in 1842 with three songs under the title of "Cavalier Lyrics."

Theme and treatment. These songs represent, not Browning's attitude towards the Cavaliers and Roundheads, they are dramatic renderings of the Cavalier cause voiced by or, or more, typical Cavaliers. Browning conveys, by implication, in the three poems, three stages in the history of the Cavaliers' struggle. The first lyric is sung while a Royalist party is marching to Nottingham, to the raising of the standard; the second when the Cavalier has lost fortune and son; the third when his home and wife are in danger. Browning suggests in each case the speaker, the situation, and moment when each song is sung.

The indomitable spirit of the old Cavalier recalls the toast of Wildrake in Scott's *Woodstock*, II, ii:—

"Bring the bowl which you boast,
Fill it up to the brim;
'Tis to him we love most.
And to all who love him.
Brave gallants, stand up.
And avaunt, ye base carles!
Were there death in the cup,
Here's a Health to King Charles!"

The *Cavalier Tunes* are set to music by Dr. Villiers Stanford.

I. MARCHING ALONG.

Metrical form. The emphatic dactyls give the dominant pattern to a stirring, irregular metre. The irregularities arise from the frequent omission of one or more

unaccented syllables, especially at the cæsura and in the concluding foot. The stanza is made up of three sets of rimed couplets ending in a fourth couplet as refrain.

Page 93. 1. 2.—crop-headed. In December, 1641, when the friction between King and Parliament was reaching the acute stage, crowds of excited Londoners gathered around Whitehall, and the bishops were rabbled on their way to the House. "The courtiers declared openly that the rabbling of the bishops proved that there was 'no free Parliament' and strove to bring about fresh outrages by gathering a mob of officers and soldiers of fortune, who were employed in the Irish war, and pitting them against the crowds at Whitehall. The combatants peiced each other with nicknames which were soon to pass into history. To wear his hair long and flowing almost to the shoulder was at this time the mark of a gentleman, whether Puritan or anti-Puritan. Servants, on the other hand, or apprentices, wore the hair closely cropped to the head. The crowds who flocked to Westminster were chiefly made up of London apprentices; and their opponents taunted them as 'Roundheads.' They replied by branding the courtiers about Whitehall as soldiers of fortune or 'Cavaliers.' The gentlemen who gathered round the King in the coming struggle were as far from being military adventurers as the gentlemen who fought for the Parliament were London apprentices; but the word soon passed into nicknames for the whole mass of royalists and patriots."—J. R. Green, *History of the English People*.

1. 7.—Pym. John Pym (1584–1643), statesman and Parliamentary leader. He was one of the managers of Buckingham's impeachment, and an advocate of the Petition of Right in 1628. He assisted in the impeachment of Laud and was one of the five members whose arrest was attempted by Charles I., January, 1642.

carle. (O.N. *karl*, Sw., Dan. *karl*.) Churl. A man of the common people, particularly a countryman. Hence, a fellow of low birth and rude manners, passing later into a term of vague contempt.

l. 8.—**parle.** Conference, debate. Archaic. (Fr. *parler*, to speak.)

“When, in an angry parle,
He smote the sledded Polacks on the ice.”

—Shakspeare, *Hamlet*, i, i, 62f.

l. 10.—**pasty** (*pā'stē*). A large pie, made generally of meat.

Page 94. l. 14.—**Hampden.** John Hampden (1594–1642), prominent for his refusal to pay Ship Money; one of the Five Members; commanded a regiment for the Parliament, and was mortally wounded in battle. See Gray's *Elegy*.

l. 15.—**Hazelrig.** Sir Arthur Hazelrig (1612–1660), another of the Five Members.

Fiennes. John Fiennes, a prominent officer of the Parliament from the beginning of the Civil War. Cromwell commended him: “His diligence is so great, and this I must testify, that I find no man more ready to service than himself.”

young Harry. Sir Henry Vane (1612–1662), commonly called Sir Harry and young Harry to distinguish him from his father of the same name; governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, 1636–37; one of the Parliamentary Commissioners who negotiated the Solemn League and Covenant with Scotland; later imprisoned for an attack on the Protectorate of Cromwell. At the Restoration he was exempted from the Act of Pardon and Oblivion, and executed.

l. 16.—**Rupert.** Prince of the Palatinate, and nephew of Charles I. After serving in the Thirty Years' War he joined the King against the Parliament and became famous as a dashing military leader.

l. 19.—**snarls.** Freq. of snare, a difficult knot, a vexatious controversy, a squabble; or else connected with snarl, allied with sneer. Cf. O. Du. *snarren*, to brawl.

l. 22.—**Nottingham.** The King "raised the Royal Standard at Nottingham 'on the evening of a very stormy and tempestuous day,' the twenty-third of August" (1642). This signalized the outbreak of hostilities between the King and Parliament.

II. GIVE A ROUSE.

Metrical form. The metre is a free use of amphibrachs in three accent lines grouped in quatrains with alternate double rimes. Note the vigor of stress got by using secondary accents, e.g. King' Charles'.

Page 94. Title. Rouse. A full bumper. In *Hamlet*, i, ii, 127, the "health" the King drinks is "the King's rouse" (Dan. *ruus*, intoxication).

Page 95. l. 16.—Noll's damned croopers. Cromwell told Hampden at the first repulse of the Parliamentarians: "You must get men of spirit, i a spirit that is likely to go on as far as gentlemen will go; or else you will be beaten still." Says Gardiner: "It was this idea which Cromwell . . . put into execution. He took for his soldiers sternly Puritan men, who had their hearts in his cause; but he was not content with religious zeal alone. Everyone who served under him must undergo the severest discipline. After a few months he had a cavalry regiment under his orders so fiery and at the same time so well under restraint that no body of horse on either side could compare with it."—*History of the Great Civil War*.

III. BOOT AND SADDLE.

Metrical form. The dominant measure is dactylic, in four-accent lines, grouped in rimed triplets completed to a quatrain by a refrain.

Page 95. l. . gray, and especially silvery gray, is a favourite epithet of Browning's. Cf. *Love Among the Ruins*, l. 53; *Up at a Villa*, l. 20; *Andrea del Sarto*, ll. 34, 98, 168, 227; *An Epistle*, l. 47.

Page 96. **Castle Brancepeth.** The castle is on the river Wear, four miles from the city of Durham, in the county of the same name. Early in the nineteenth century it was to a great extent rebuilt.

"One remaining turret is perhaps the most interesting as it is certainly the most picturesque fragment of the ancient castle."—J. R. Boyle, *Guide to Durham*. The author of this guide quotes a description of a hundred years ago: "Between the works is a spacious area, which you enter from the north by a gate with a portcullis, and defended by two square towers. . . . From the gate on the west is a high wall, and where it forms angles it is garnished with small square towers, on the area side supported by an arch; and in the floor is a square aperture to receive materials from persons below, whereby the guard should annoy those who assailed the wall. Towards the north and east the castle has been defended by a moat; to the south and west the walls rise from the rock nearly forty feet in height, watered by a small brook."

The mention of a Northumberland castle breaks the unity of person in the poems, which start with "Kentish" Sir Byng. Some may prefer to regard the castle as merely typical.

MY LAST DUCHESS.

Composition and publication. First printed in *Dramatic Lyrics*, the third number of *Bells and Pomegranates*, 1842, where it was called *Italy*. In the *Poetical Works* of 1863, it appears among the *Romances* with the present title.

Theme and treatment. This is a typical psychological monologue. It reveals, touch by touch, the soul of the duke through his own utterances; his relations with his wife, and her character, story, and tragic fate. Note how Browning brings in incidental references, the situation of the speaker, the person of the envoy, and his mission.

Metrical form. The metrical form is rhimed couplets of iambic pentameter, freely treated, as befits the theme.

Page 96. Sub-title. Ferrara. Ferrara is in the province of the Veneto, between Venice and Ravenna. "It is one of the most Italian of Italian towns, and one of the most melancholy. Its interest is entirely of the past, and it is more ragged than picturesque. It seems to have gone asleep in the end of the sixteenth century . . . and never to have awaked."—H. A.

The Dukes of Ferrara united, to a higher degree even than the average Italian despot of the Renaissance, a genuine love of art and letters with the most cold-blooded tyranny and cruelty.

"Patron or tyrant, as the changing mood
Of petty power impell'd."

—Byron, *Childe Harold*, IV, xxxv.

It may well have been this fact that led Browning to localize the poem in the edition of 1863.

"Under the House of Este, Ferrara was famous throughout Italy for its gaiety and splendour. No city enjoyed more brilliant or more frequent public shows. Nowhere did the aristocracy retain so much feudal magnificence and chivalrous enjoyment. The square castle of red brick, which still stands in the middle of the town, was thronged with poets, players, fools who enjoyed an almost European reputation, court flatterers, knights, pages, scholars, and fair ladies. But beneath its cube of solid masonry, on a level with the moat, shut out from daylight by the sevenfold series of iron bars, lay dungeons in which the objects

of the Duke's displeasure clanked chains and sighed their lives away."—J. A. Symonds, *Age of the Despots*.

l. 3.—**that piece a wonder**. Note the æsthetic admiration of the duke in contrast with his heartlessness.

Frà Pandulf. Frà, Ital. friar. Monks, *e.g.*, Frà Angelico, Frà Domenico, were found among the foremost painters of the Renaissance. This artist is imaginary.

l. 10.—**the curtain**. Pictures are frequently curtained for protection—this one for grudge.

Page 97. l. 28.—**white mule**. Mules, and particularly white ones, were once considered the proper saddle animals for ecclesiastics and ladies of position. The mediæval popes rode a white mule in their ceremonial progresses through Rome, and a mule was included in the bridal provision which Margaret of Angoulême, sister of Francis I., made for her ladies of honour.

l. 33.—**nine-hundred-year-old name**. The house of Este, whose name is associated with the history of Ferrara, is one of the most ancient in Italy. According to Muratori it originated from one of the petty princes who governed Tuscany under the Carlovingsians in the ninth century; but due allowance must be made for family pride in mythical ancestors.

Page 98. l. 46.—**all smiles stopped**. His euphemism for her murder. This, at least, is more probable than the mere breaking of her nature and her heart—the interpretation sometimes given to the line.

l. 54.—**Notice Neptune . . . taming**. The very object of art—made to his order—embodies the dominant characteristic of the duke.

l. 56.—**Claus of Innsbruck**. Innsbruck (*ins'prook*), the chief town of the Tyrol, Austria. The sculptor and his Neptune are as imaginary as Frà Pandulf and his portrait; but the poet may have chosen Innsbruck as the native

"HOW THEY BROUGHT THE GOOD NEWS." 197

town of the artist because of the famous bronze casting that must have been done there for the tomb of Maximilian.

"Perhaps the most imposing bronze monument in the world is that to the emperor Maximilian in the palace church at Innsbruck."—*Bronzes*, C. D. E. Fortnum.

'HOW THEY BROUGHT THE GOOD NEWS
FROM GHENT TO AIX.'

Composition and publication. In 1838 "Mr. Browning sailed from London with Captain Davidson of the 'Norham Castle,' a merchant vessel bound for Trieste, on which he found himself the only passenger. . . . The weather was stormy in the Bay of Biscay . . . but the captain supported him on to the deck as they passed through the Straits of Gibraltar, that he might not lose the sight. He recovered, as we know, sufficiently to write 'How They brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix'; but we can imagine with what revulsion of feeling towards firm land and healthy motion this dream of a headlong gallop was born in him. The poem was pencilled on the cover of Bartoli's 'De Simboli trasportati al Morale,' a favourite book and constant companion of his, and in spite of perfect effacement as far as sense goes, the pencil dints are still visible. The little poem 'Home Thoughts from the Sea' was written at the same time and in the same manner."—Mrs. Sutherland Orr, *Life and Letters*, chap. vii.

It was published in 1845, in *Dramatic Romances and Lyrics*, the seventh number of *Bells and Pomegranates*. In 1863 it appeared in the *Lyrics*, and in 1868 it was put under the head of *Dramatic Lyrics*.

Theme and treatment. The "good news" is imaginary. Yet the whole is typically true of the history of the

Netherlands. Suppose, for instance, it were that of the Pacification of Ghent, November 8, 1576. By it all the seventeen States of the Netherlands bound themselves to expel the Spaniards, and agreed to sink religious difficulties for that purpose. But Browning centres the interest, by the very historic vagueness, on the real hero of the poem—the good horse Roland.

Metrical form. The metre is amphibrachic, six four-accent lines riming in couplets. Is the effect of the metre onomatopœic?

Page 98. [16—.] Browning's hint to the reader of the general historic period in which he sets the incident.

Title. Ghent. A town in Belgium at the junction of the rivers Scheldt and Lys, whose branches spread through the town in numerous canals. It has picturesquely crooked streets and a fantastic variety of gable ends to the houses.

The burghers were always turbulent and hard to govern. In the belfry of the cathedral hung the great tocsin bell "Roland," and at its call the turbulent spirits poured out into the market-place intent on redress of real or imaginary breaches of the privileges of the guilds.

"And again the wild alarum sounded from the tocsin's throat;
Till the bell of Ghent responded o'er lagoon and dike of sand,
'I am Roland! I am Roland! there is victory in the land.'"
—Longfellow, *The Belfry of Bruges*.

The bell's name may have suggested to Browning the horse's name.

Aix (ex). Aix-la-Chapelle (*ex iah shah pel'*) was the Aquæ Grani of the Romans, and a favourite residence of Charlemagne, who died there, 814, and was buried in the Cathedral. Aix witnessed the coronation of thirty German emperors, and was, in a special sense, the free city of the

Holy Roman Empire and seat of royalty: ("urbs Aquensis, urbs regalis, regni sedes principalis, prima regum curia"). It lies on the German border of the Netherlands, almost directly east from Ghent, about eighty miles as the crow flies.

1. 2.—**All three.** Three are sent for better assurance of one getting through.

1. 5.—**postern** (*pōstern*). A back-door to a fortress; Lat. *posterula*, a small back-door (Lat. *posterus*, following).

Page 99. 1. 10.—**pique.** Given in the Century Dict. as derived from the Fr. *pique*, a point, and meaning the point or peak of a saddle.

1. 11.—**cheek-strap.** The side-strap of a bridle.

1. 14.—**Lokeren** (*lō' ker en*). A prosperous manufacturing town in East Flanders, on the river Durme.

1. 15.—**Boom.** A town in the province of Antwerp, on the right bank of the Rupel, a short channel which connects the united waters of the Nethe, Dyle, and Senne into the Scheldt.

1. 16.—**Düffeld.** A small town on the river Nethe.

1. 17.—**Mechlin** (*mek' lin*). Fr. Malines. A city in the province of Antwerp, once famous for its lace. It is one of the most picturesque of the Belgian cities, with quaint domestic architecture. The cathedral of St. Rombold has a massive unfinished tower of the fifteenth century. In it are very musical chimes, and a clock with a face forty-eight feet in diameter.

1. 19.—**Aerschot** (*aar' skot*). A town in the province of Brabant.

Page 100. 1. 29.—**spume-flake.** Flecks of foam indicative of the tremendous speed and irritation of the bit.

1. 31.—**Hasselt.** The chief town of the Belgian province of Limburg.

l. 32.—**Roos** (*rōz*). Dutch for rose.

l. 38.—**Loos** (*lōz*). A town nine miles south of Hasselt.

Tongres (*tongr'*). A town on the Geer, a tributary of the Meuse, thirteen miles s. s.e. of Hasselt. It was the ancient capital of the Germanic Tungri.

l. 41.—**Dalhem**. The frontier town of Dalhem lies much too far away to the north to afford a sight of the white dome-spire from the vicinity of Aix.

dome-spire. Presumably the cupola which crowns the octagon of the Minster. It is 104 feet in height.

l. 44.—**neck and croup**. Croup, the hinder part of a horse, hence the roan fell from head to tail, prone.

Page 101. l. 49.—**cast off my buffcoat**. A heavy military coat made of "buff" leather, i.e., buffalo-hide, but usually ox-hide, dressed with oil, having a characteristic fuzzy surface and a dull whitish-yellow colour.

holster. Etymologically a sheath or hiding-place. A leather case for a pistol fixed to the pommel of a saddle or worn on the belt.

l. 50.—**jack-boots**. Heavy boots coming above the knee, which served as defensive armour in the seventeenth century.

ll. 55-60.—**And all I remember, etc.** "Then 'The Ride'—with that touch of natural feeling at the end, to prove that it was not in brutal carelessness that the poor horse was driven through all that suffering . . . yes, and how that one touch of softness acts back upon the energy and resolution and exalts both, instead of weakening everything, as might have been expected by the vulgar of writers or critics."—Miss Barrett, Letter to Robert Browning, November, 1845.

l. 59.—**burgess**. An inhabitant of a borough; strictly one possessing full municipal rights.

HOME-THOUGHTS, FROM ABROAD.

Composition and publication. Published in *Dramatic Romances and Lyrics*, the seventh number of *Bells and Pomegranates*, 1845. As there published, three poems were included under this title: I. "Oh, to be in England"; II. "Here's to Nelson's Memory"; III. "Nobly Cape St. Vincent." In the *Poems* of 1849 the first of these pieces only appeared under the title of *Home-Thoughts, from Abroad*; and in all subsequent editions it has been so published (Cooke)

Theme and treatment. This poem is a late note in the long line of English lyric poetry exultant at the expanding beauty of the English spring—its wealth of flowers and chorus of birds.

Comparison can be made with Sir Philip Sidney, *Philomela*; Shakspere, *Sonnet xcvi*, and *Romeo and Juliet*, i, ii, 27; Herrick, *Corinna's going a-Maying*; Milton, *L'Allegro*; Wordsworth, *Intimations of Immortality*; Keats, *Fancy*; Tennyson, *The Progress of Spring*; George Meredith, *Tardy Spring*.

Metrical form. The measure is a free treatment of iambs, varied with trochees and anapests, having only a semblance of pattern in the variety.

Page 102. l. 3.—**brushwood sheaf.** The close-growing suckers round the foot of the elm.

l. 4.—**bo'** The stem or trunk of a tree.

l. 5.—**chaffinch.** A song-bird, "the most abundant" in England. "The male is the prettiest of British song-birds, with its soft blue-grey back, barred wings, and pink breast and sides. . . . The song begins with a rapid wren-like trill, which quickly becomes a sharp jingle then slides into a warble, and ends with an abrupt flourish" (Burroughs).

l. 8.—**whitethroat.** A small singing bird of the British Isles.

l. 12.—**thrush.** The song thrush, mavis, or throistle of Europe, familiar to every garden and field. The thrush is "a shrill whistling polyglot" (Burroughs). Its song may be marked 'x, 'x; 'x, 'x; x'x'; 'x'x, 'x'x; 'x', 'x', 'x', which shows its fondness for repetition. The song is "animated, loud and clear, but never to my ear melodious" (Burroughs).

l. 15.—**hoary.** White, or whitish, A.S. *harian*, to become gray.

l. 18.—**gaudy melon-flower.** The melon has a coarse yellow flower. This is the touch suggesting the place of the speaker—Italy.

LOVE AMONG THE RUINS.

Composition and publication. This was written at Rome in the winter of 1853-54. It was first printed in *Men and Women*, 1855, of which it was the opening poem.

Theme and treatment. The setting of this poem is a sort of composite picture of the desolate site of an ancient city. "Where the quiet-coloured end of evening smiles miles and miles," certainly suggests the Campagna near Rome, but of the grandeur that was Rome much more remains than a single turret. The "hundred-gated circuit of a wall" (l. 21) is a reminiscence of Thebes, or possibly of many-gated Troy. The utter desolation is Carthage that was or "*Troja fuit*." But again the vision of the chariot race and the mountains topped with temples, the causeys, aqueducts, and colonnades is Rome in the days of the emperors. Against that background of "the glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome," Browning puts the work of actual human life, in the form he thought earth's greatest gift—love.

Metrical form. The poem is in trochaics—twelve-line stanza of a six-accent line alternating with two-accent in

riming pairs. The movement is most harmonious. "Ears alert to novel poetic music must have thrilled to the new strain which sounded first—*Lore among the Ruins*, with its Millet-like opening."—W. Sharp.

Page 104. l. 39.—**caper.** A shrub in habit of growth like the common bramble, abundant on walls and rocky places in the south of Europe; the buds of the flowers are used for pickling.

l. 41.—**houseleek.** A succulent herb with very thick, bushy leaves and pink flowers; very tenacious of life.

l. 65.—**causey.** A highway, raised and paved. Applied especially to the Roman roads. This word is not a corruption of causeway, though the two words are used almost interchangeably: causeway was originally a *causey way*, or way raised on a mound. (Fr. *chaussée*, road.)

Page 105. l. 64.—**colonnade.** A series of columns placed at regular intervals and supporting an entablature. In imperial Rome the various *fora* were connected by colonnades in the valley flanked by the various hills of the city.

UP AT A VILLA — DOWN IN THE CITY.

Composition and publication. Published in *Men and Women*, 1855.

Theme and treatment. This poem is an astonishing piece "of intimate and joyful observation of scenery."—Stopford Brooke.

In other poems Browning has rendered the spirit of Italy in her art, her architecture, her music—the glory and shame of her past, the new strivings for united Italy—but here he has given us the simple charm of the "land of lands"—the unexplained and unexplainable attraction

of every-day Italy herself—the fascination of the life of the meanest little town, the perpetual movement, the cheerful noise and bustle, which somehow are only piquantly interesting. The traveller to-day still finds much interest in the doings of the city square. A responsive chant under the window in the early morning calls him to see the Host passing under its awning-canopy with attending acolytes; a wailing dirge at nightfall accompanies a funeral procession with hooded figures and torches; a collection for charity, or a lottery, produces a gathering of citizens, soldiers, and police, all talking and all reveling in the to-do; while water is drawn from the fountain and vegetables are washed in its basin all day long. Beautiful are the mountains, and the olive trees, and fire-flies, but anyone with a taste for humanity will sympathize with the lover of city life who is banished by poverty to his mountain villa, and will enjoy the humour of Browning's delineation of his feelings.

Page 106. l. 4.—by Bacchus. *It. per Bacco*: the Italian still swears by the Gods of Rome.

Page 107. l. 9.—shag of a bush. Rough, bushy mass. (*A.S. sceacga*, rough hair.)

l. 19.—the brown ploughed land, etc. "Nothing changes in Italy. The wooden ploughs are those which Virgil knew. The sight of one of them would save an intelligent lad much trouble in mastering a certain passage on the Georgics. . . . I noticed two young contadini in one field . . . guiding their ploughs along a hedge of olive-trees, slanting upwards, the white-horned oxen moving slowly through the marl, and the lads bending to press the plough-shares home. It was a delicate piece of colour—the grey mist of the olive branches, the warm smoking earth, the creamy flanks of the oxen, the

brown limbs and dark eyes of the men, who paused awhile to gaze at us, with shadows cast upon the furrows from their tall straight figures."—J. A. Symonds, *New Italian Sketches*.

oxen. The "milk-white," wide-horned cattle of northern Italy, "smoking with weight of the hard plow" (*duro fumans sub vomere taurus*), of which Virgil speaks (*Georgics*, III, 515). "In early spring, as soon as the dissolving snow melts on the white mountains, and the earth crumbles unbound by zephyrs, e'en then let my plow be pressed deep down, and my bullock begin to groan, and the share be well worn and bright from the furrow."—*Georgics* I, 43ff., tr. Lonsdale and Lee.

Page 108. l. 28.—**pash.** Apparently, like many other verbs in *-ash*, of onomatopœic origin. It is used of the dashing rain, and of the action of beating or striking water as by the feet of a horse.

l. 29.—**conch** (*konk*). A large spiral shell used as an instrument of call, and in Roman mythology given to Triton as a trumpet.

l. 32.—**cypress.** (*Cupressus semper virens*.) Common in southern Europe and remarkable for the great age it attains and the durability of its timbers. The variety here mentioned is tall and slender like the Lombardy poplar. Cf. the following lines from *De Gustibus*, another picture of Italy:—

"And one tall tree—'Tis a cypress—stands,
By the many hundred years red-rusted,
Rough iron-spiked, ripe fruit-o'er-crusted,
My sentinel to guard the sands."

Page 109. l. 34.—**thrid.** An obsolete or archaic form of thread.

stinking hemp. The hemp plant, of the same family as the nettle, is cultivated for its strong fibre: all the

parts of it have a disagreeable odour, and the smell from an entire field is so strong as to produce dizziness.

l. 36.—**cicala** (*si kâ'la*). It. for cicada. The locust and harvest-fly belong to the same family.

l. 38.—**church bells**. A vivid description of the continuous and clamorous nature of this performance is described by George Meredith, in *Diana of the Crossways*, ch. xvi.

l. 39.—**diligence**. A four-wheeled public stage-coach drawn by from four to seven horses.

l. 42.—**Pulcinello-trumpet** (*pul tshé nel' lo*). Blown to announce the puppet show. Pulcinello is the droll clown of the Neapolitan comedy, and his name is a diminutive of the Ital. *pulcino*, a young chicken. In English it is corrupted into Punchinello, and thence to Punch.

l. 44.—**liberal thieves**. These were far from being the only patriots who met an ignominious fate during the struggle for the unity of Italy. Cf. Mrs. Browning, *A Forced Recruit at Solferino*.

l. 46.—**little new law of the Duke's**. Before Italy was united under its present government it was divided into numerous kingdoms and dukedoms, some miniature in their territory and administration.

Page 110. l. 47.—**flowery marge**. Decorated border of the printed page.

l. 48.—**Dante** (1265-1321). Florentine soldier, exile, and poet; author of the *Divina Commedia*.

Boccaccio (*bokau' tsh ô*) (1313-1375), the Italian storyteller whose romances make up the *Decameron*.

Petrarca (1304-1374). The lyric poet of the early Renaissance.

St. Jerome (340(?)—420). The English accentuation is Jer'ome. The Latin Father of the church who translated the Scriptures into the Latin version known as the Vulgate.

Cicero (B.C. 106-43). The Roman orator, *par excellence*.

According to the sonnet the Reverend Don So-and-so combined the distinguishing attainments of all ages, classical, biblical, mediæval, and Renaissance.

l. 51.—**our Lady**. The Virgin Mary. Fr. Notre Dame. It. Madonna.

l. 52.—**pink gauze gown**. The childish-gaudy costumes of religious figures are in pathetic contrast with the simple faith of the worshippers.

seven swords. Emblematic of the seven sorrows of Mary. The piercing sword is based on Luke II, 35, and the seven sorrows are (1) Simeon's prophecy, (2) the flight into Egypt, (3) Christ missed, (4) the betrayal, (5) the crucifixion, (6) the descent from the cross, (7) the ascension.

l. 56.—**tax upon salt**. Salt is still a government monopoly in Italy.

passing the gate. All food pays a local tax at the gate of Italian cities, and the people seem to prefer to direct taxation this expensive and annoying method of collecting money for municipal expenses.

l. 60.—**penitents dressed in white shirts**. A shirt was the distinctive garb of one under the displeasure of the Church. At Canossa, 1077, "during three entire days the unfortunate King (the emperor Henry IV.) stood before the gate of the inner fortress, with the penitential shirt over his other garments."—*orovius*.

yellow candles. Ritual candles are ordinarily of wax and white in colour, but in offices for the dead they are of yellow wax.

Page III. l. 62.—**prevention of scandals**. The Duke's guard at the rear would tend to prevent ribald comments from the rif-raff that invariably follows a procession.

THE GUARDIAN-ANGEL.

Composition and publication. In June, 1847, the Brownings went to Ancona, "the picturesque little town which dreams out upon the Adriatic." Here, notwithstanding the heat, they spent a happy season. Here Browning wrote one of the loveliest of his short poems, *The Guardian-Angel* which had its origin in Guercino's picture in the chapel at Fano. . . . Doubtless it was written for no other reason than the urgency of song, for in it are the loving allusions to his wife, "my angel with me too," and "my love is here." . . . Browning has rarely uttered the purely personal note of his inner life. It is this that affords a peculiar value to *The Guardian Angel*, over and above its technical beauty.—W. Sharp. It was published in *Men and Women*, 1855.

Page 112. Fano. A little town on the east coast of Italy, half way between Rimini and Ancona. It is surrounded by ancient walls and moat. The picture—"Sant' Angelo Custode"—is in the church of Sant' Agostino. Mrs. Browning wrote of it to Miss Mitford as "a divine picture of Guercino's worth going all that way to see."

l. 1.—**Angel.** Angels "which are spirits, immaterial and intellectual, the glorious inhabitants of those sacred places (l. 14). . . . behold the face of God, they adore him: being rapt with love of His beauty, they cleave unto Him; desiring to resemble Him, they long to do good to all His creatures, and especially unto the children of men."—Richard Hooker. The belief that to every child is appointed a guardian-angel to care for it through life is based on Psalm xxxiv, 7; xci, 11, 12; and Matt. xviii, 10. In Frà Angelico's picture of Paradise the guardian-spirits come out to meet the souls which they have had in charge. Cf. Spenser, *Faery Queen*, bk. II, cant. VIII, stzs. 1, 2.

Page 113. l. 11.—**those wings.** Cf. Ps. xci, 4. Wings are symbols of untiring strength and activity. In Egypt, the disk flanked by outstretched wings, symbolizing the activity of the sun in making its daily journey from one end of heaven to the other, crowns every temple gateway.

l. 18.—**bird of God.** An expression of Dante's. "He seeks not . . . other sail than his own wings between so distant shores. See how he has them pointed towards the heaven, drawing the air with his eternal feathers. . . . Then as more and more toward us came the bird of God, more bright he appeared, by reason whereof the eye endured him not nigh."—*Purg.* II, 31ff. Tr. C. J. Butler.

Page 114.—l. 36. **Guercino** (*guer-chē' nō*). Giovanni Francesco Barberini, 1592-1666. Called Guercino, from his slight squint. He was a disciple of the Caracci and the Bolognese school, more highly estimated in the middle of the last century than now. His pictures have animation and brilliant colour, but are sometimes heavy.

l. 37.—**Alfred, dear friend.** Alfred Domett, an early friend of Browning. He went out to New Zealand, May, 1842, among the earliest settlers. It was in reference to his sudden departure that Browning wrote his *Waring*. In New Zealand he settled in the North Island, in the province named for the river Wairoa (l. 55). After rendering notable service in the young colony, Domett returned to London, and in later life he and Browning renewed their early friendship. He was wont "to produce with pride his sea-stained copy of Browning's *Bells and Pomegranates*."—F. J. Furnivall.

l. 47.—**Guercino's fame.** Guercino's earliest work is his strongest. Then he used broad masses of shadow and small clear lights. His later work is insipid. "The Guardian-Angel" is not included in the lists of his greatest work.

l. 55.—**Wairoa** (*wi' ro ah*). River in the North Island, New Zealand.

l. 56.—**Ancona**. On the Adriatic. "So we went to Ancona—a striking sea city, holding up against the brown rocks, and elbowing out the purple tides—beautiful to look upon. An exfoliation of the rock itself you would call the houses that seem to grow there—so identical is the colour and character."—Mrs. Browning, to Miss Mitford.

ANDREA DEL SARTO.

Composition and publication. There is a portrait of Andrea del Sarto and his wife in the Pitti Palace at Florence, commonly said to have been painted by the artist himself, though Mr. Guinness, a recent biographer, thinks it cannot have been painted by Andrea, and Mr. Berenson does not even give it mention in his list of that artist's works. F. J. Furnivall reported to the Browning Society concerning this picture as follows:—"I asked Browning whether the Pitti picture had suggested his poem. He said, Yes it had. Mr. Kenyon, his wife's old friend and his own, had asked him to buy for him, Mr. K., a copy of the Pitti *Andrea*. None was on sale, nor could be got; and so Browning, as he could not send a copy of the painting, wrote what it told him in words, and sent his poem to Mr. Kenyon."

It was first published as the opening poem of the second volume of *Men and Women*.

Theme and treatment. Andrea del Sarto (1488–1530) was a Florentine, the son of a tailor (It. *sarto*) whence the name, "the Tailor's Andrew." Like many of his contemporaries he came to painting after apprenticeship to a goldsmith. Vasari (see note to l. 106) tells us that he was a "kind man of mild manners, but that there was a

want of force in his nature . . . nor did he at any time display one particle of elevation, which, could it but have been added to the advantages wherewith he was endowed, would have rendered him a truly divine painter. . . . His figures are nevertheless well drawn, they are entirely free from errors and perfect in all their proportions."

Vasari was himself a pupil of Andrea, and probably lived in his household, so he had very good opportunities of observing Andrea's wife. This lady was Lucrezia (l. 2) di Baccio del Fede, a widow and of great beauty. Vasari says that after her advent "his disciples remained with him . . . yet there was not one of them, great or small, who was not maltreated by his wife, both by evil words and despicable actions: none could escape her blows." "His love for her having more influence over him than the glory and honour toward which he had begun to make such hopeful advances."

She quartered a troop of hungry relatives upon him, so that, infatuated as he was, it must have been a relief when a summons came from France. Two pictures of his had been sent to France and "were obtaining much admiration from King Francis I. (l. 149), and among the many others which had been sent to him . . . these had been adjudged far the best." Learning that Andrea might be prevailed upon to visit France he "gave orders that everything needful should be done for that purpose." Arrived at court, he was received with great distinction and given not only money but "very rich and honourable vestments." His work was thoroughly appreciated and "he gave very great satisfaction to the whole court." But Lucrezia grew impatient and summoned him back (ll. 166, 173). He asked leave of absence from the king, promising with an oath on the gospels, that he would return with his wife in a few months. The king gave him money wherewith to purchase works of art, and let him go.

He enjoyed the society of his wife and her friends for a few months, but they were all greedy for money (l. 239) and soon, what with building (ll. 212, 249), indulging himself in various pleasures, and doing no work, he had spent not only all his own money but all that entrusted to him by the King of France. For all that he would have returned to France, "but the tears and prayers of his wife had more power than his own necessities, or the faith he had pledged to the king: he remained therefore in Florence . . . and from a highly eminent position he sank to the very lowest, procuring a livelihood and passing his time as best he might" (ll. 142-144).

Lavishly as he spent on Lucrezia, he did nothing for his own parents, "whom he would not even see, and who at the end of a certain period ended their lives in great poverty and misery" (l. 250). After the siege of Florence by the Spaniards, Andrea fell ill and died in loneliness and neglect, as his wife withdrew "herself from him as much as she could, being moved by her fear of the pest."

The quotations are from Mrs. Jonathan Foster's translation of Vasari, *Lives of the Painters*.

Vasari's most bitter accusations of Lucrezia occur only in the first edition of his *Lives of the Painters*. Mr. H. Guinness, a recent biographer of Andrea, says:—"Lucrezia died in January, 1570, at the age of eighty-seven, or thereabouts. Many efforts have been made of late to whitewash her memory and to represent her as a model wife. There is sufficient evidence to show that she was a woman of small aims and of personal egoisms, which left her husband without that higher sympathy which his art demanded. Nor was she one who could put self aside, and while encouraging him to fulfil all honourable obligations, would fill his cup of human happiness full, and at the last watch by him with tender care and helpfulness."

"Vasari himself modifies, in his second edition, the account he has given of the fair Lucrezia . . . For the purposes of the poem Browning is content to take the traditional account of the matter, which, after all, seems to be substantially accurate."—E. Radford.

The poem renders the secret causes in the soul's self of artistic failure. He paints through Andrea's self revelation at twilight, in his studio, with his wife, the conflict of his love, or rather infatuation, and his art, and the tragic ruin of the best in the painter, flawed in life, if not in art.

Metrical form. The measure is blank-verse—five-accent iambic lines unrimed. The colloquial tone comes largely from the great variation in the place of the cæsura.

Page 115. Title. *Andrea* (*an drā' ah*).

Faultless Painter. In Italian called "senza errori" (Vasari).

l. 2.—**Lucrezia** (*loo krā' tsē ah*).

l. 15.—**Fiesole** (*fē ā' sō lē*). A village on the heights about three miles to the N.E. of Florence. "Beyond are weathered hillsides—grey, white, and black—a severe picture in *grisaille*. In the cleft huddles Fiesole with one thin tower."—M. Hewlett, *Road in Tuscany*.

l. 25.—**model.** "He rarely painted the countenance of a woman in any place that he did not model himself upon the features of his wife; and if at any time he took his model from any other face there was always a resemblance to hers in the painting, not only because he had this woman constantly before him and depicted her frequently, but also, and what is still more, because he had her lineaments engraven on his heart."—Vasari. See also l. 178.

Page 117. l. 29.—**My face, my moon.** So Tennyson speaks of Cleopatra—

"Once, like the moon, I made
The ever-shifting currents of the blood
According to my humour ebb and flow."

—*A Dream of Fair Women*

"You are the powerful moon of my blood's sea."

—Ford and Dekker, *Witch of Edmonton*, II, II (Corson).

My everybody's moon. Cf. Shakspeare, Sonnet

CXXXVII—

"If eyes, corrupt by over-partial looks
Be anchor'd in the bay where all men ride."

l. 41.—**chapel-top.** Fiesole has an ancient cathedral,
with the usual religious buildings.

l. 57.—**cartoon.** Ital. *cartone*, an augmentative of
carta, paper. A drawing on stout paper, made as a
design for a picture of the same size to be executed in
fresco, oil, or tapestry.

Page 118. l. 59.—**Behold Madonna.** The very Virgin,
as if alive.

l. 65.—**Legate.** Lat. *legatus*, per. part. of *legare*, to
send as a deputy. An ecclesiastic deputed to represent
the Pope, and armed with his authority.

l. 66.—**in France.** See l. 149 and note.

l. 82.—**forthright.** Direct, going straight to the point.

Page 119. l. 93.—**Morello.** A mountain to the N.W. of
Florence (3065 ft.). It is one of the most conspicuous
points of the hill-girdle of Florence, and is regarded by
the Florentines as a barometer. When Monte Morello
wears a cap of clouds the Florentines carry umbrellas.

l. 99.—**placid and perfect with my art.** "I paid a visit
to the gallery of the Pitti Palace. There is too large an
admixture of Andrea del Sarto's pictures in this gallery;
everywhere you see them, cold, proper, and uncriticisable,
looking so much like first-rate excellence, that you inevit-
ably quarrel with your own taste for not admiring them."

—Hawthorne, *Italian Note-Book*.

l. 105.—**Urbinate.** Raphael (*raaf' ah el*), born in Urbino, the greatest master of harmony among painters (1483-1520).

l. 106.—**George Vasari.** Giorgio Vasari (1512-1574). The "biographer-general of painters, sculptors, and architects, may be called the Herodotus of art; a practitioner himself, and acquainted with many of the persons whom he describes; lively and garrulous, apparently most artless, he possesses either the science or the knack of felicitous composition in an extraordinary degree. Living when picturesque stories about artists were accepted without question, he was entirely unembarrassed in relating such as commend themselves to him, to the joy of the readers and the scandal of the critics of the future."
—R. Garnett, *A History of Italian Literature*.

Page 120. l. 125.—**fowler's pipe.** In snaring birds, either with nets or birdlime, a bird-note is needed to coax the victims. This is sometimes effected by tame birds taught to give the note at the right moment, or else "the fowler must stand as near as he can without being discovered; and with the mouth or otherwise make such notes as birds do when they attack or call one another."
—H. Harewood, *A Dictionary of Sports*.

l. 130.—**Agnolo** (*an' ē ō lō*). One version of the latter part of the name of Michelangelo, used by him in signatures to some of his pictures. It is used by Vasari throughout, whence probably it became familiar to Browning.

l. 146.—**The Paris lords.** See l. 149 and note.

Page 121. l. 149.—**That Francis.** See note on Andrea, ante. Francis I. of France is the brilliantly showy figure of the French Renaissance. A Venetian ambassador to the French Court, one Cavalli, describes him, when past middle life: "He is of a presence so royal, that without knowing him or ever having seen his portrait, there is not

one stranger who would not say when he saw him: 'That is the King.' There is in all his movements a gravity and a grandeur which, to my thinking, no prince can hope to emulate. . . . He loves distinction in apparel. His clothes are braided and slashed and sprinkled with precious stones. He speaks passing well on the chase and on all bodily exercise; of painting also, and of letters, and of languages, dead or living." He was genuinely a lover of the arts, and dearly loved to show his knowledge and his patronage, for which see J. A. Symonds, *Life of Cellini*.

l. 150.—**Fontainebleau.** The town is thirty-seven miles to the south-east of Paris. Its chateau is one of the finest in France. When Francis I. began his reign it was a mere hunting-lodge in the forest. Of all the king's splendid buildings this lay nearest to his heart. The gardens were cut out of the forest, and Italian workmen were summoned to aid the king's magnificent plans.

l. 152.—**the glory, Rafael's daily wear.** "Over Raphael's niche in the Temple of Fame might be written 'I have said ye are gods,' for the children of men in his ideal world are divinized. The god-like spirit in man is all in all. Happy indeed was the art that by its limitations and selections could thus early express the good news of the Renaissance."—J. A. Symonds.

l. 153.—**humane.** Characterized by such behaviour as becomes a man; but the word is applied to the study of the literature which tends to refine, *litteræ humaniores*, which were especially cultivated in the Renaissance court of Francis I.

l. 170.—**grange.** Originally a depository for grain, (Lat. *granum*, grain), then a country house with farm buildings attached. Here a barn or granary.

Page 122. l. 187.—**a palace wall.** Raphael decorated in fresco the papal state-apartments (*Stanze*) of the Vatican, by order of Popes Julius II. and Leo X.

"In the Vatican he covered the walls and ceilings of the Stanze with historical and symbolical frescoes that embrace the whole of human knowledge. The cramping limits of ecclesiastical tradition are transcended. The synod of the antique sages finds a place beside the synod of the fathers and the company of saints. . . . A new catholicity, a new orthodoxy of the beautiful, appears. The Renaissance in all its breadth and liberality of judgment takes ideal form. Nor is there any sense of discord: for the genius of Raphael views both revelations, Christian and pagan, from a point of view of art above them. To his pure and unimpeded faculty the task of translating motives so diverse into mutually concordant shapes was easy."—J. A. Symonds, *Renaissance in Italy, Fine Arts*.

l. 199. — **What he?** Andrea repeats the question his wife asks or looks. Andrea's preference for the judgment of the one whose judgment counts, should be compared with Verdi's—

"He looks through all the roaring and the wreaths
Where sits Rossini patient in his stall."

—*Bishop Bloughram's Apology*.

Page 123. l. 210. — **cue-owls.** A name applied to the scope-owl, common on the shores of the Mediterranean and a summer visitant to Britain. "To my ears its cry is a clear metallic ringing *ki-ou*—whence the Italian name *chiù*."—H. Saunders, in *New English Dictionary*. *Chiù* is given by Farfani as an imitative name for the small owl whose note is considered in Italy as the harbinger of the long warm days.

"While still the cue-owls from the cypresses
Of the Poggio called and counted every pulse
Of the skye's palpitation."

—E. B. Browning, *Aurora Leigh*, VIII, 25ff.

Page 124. l. 241. — **scudi** (*o' dē*). Ital. pl. of *scudo*, an Italian coin nearly equivalent to a dollar. The word is derived from Lat. *scutum*, shield.

1. 261. — Four great walls. See Revelation, xxi, 16, 17.

New Jerusalem. See Revelation, xxi, 2.

1. 263. — For Leonard, Rafael, Agnolo and me. "The four greatest draughtsmen of this epoch were Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Raffaello, and Andrea del Sarto. They are not to be reckoned as equals; for Leonardo and Michelangelo outstrip the other two almost as much as these surpass all lesser craftsmen. Each of the four men expressed his own peculiar vision of the world with pen, or chalk, or metal point, finding the unique inevitable line, the exact touch and quality of stroke, which should present at once a lively transcript from real Nature, and a revelation of the artist's particular way of feeling nature. In Leonardo it is a line of subtlety and infinite suggestiveness; in Michelangelo it compels attention and forcibly defines the essence of the object; in Rafael it carries melody, the charm of an unerring rhythm; in Andrea it seems to call for tone, colour, atmosphere, and makes their presence felt. Raffaello was often faulty: even in the wonderful pen-drawing of two nudes he sent Albrecht Dürer as a sample of his skill, we blame the knees and ankles of his models. (Cf. ll. 111-115, 194.) Leonardo was sometimes wilful, whimsical, seduced by dreamland, like a god-born amateur. Andrea allowed his facility to lead him into languor, and lacked passion. Michelangelo's work shows none of these shortcomings; it is always technically faultless, instinct with passion, super-eminent in force. . . . Michelangelo's style of design is that of a sculptor, Andrea's of a colourist, Leonardo's of a curious student, Raffaello's of a musician and improvisatore." — J. A. Symonds, *Life of Michelangelo*.

AN EPISTLE.

Composition and publication. This was begun at Rome in the winter of 1853-54, and completed at Florence. Published in *Men and Women*, 1855.

"I fancy that *An Epistle to Karshish* was born one day when he read those two stanzas in *In Memoriam* about Lazarus, and imagined how the subject would come to him."—S. Brooke.

"Where wert thou, brother, those four days?
There lives no record of reply,
Which telling what it is to die
Had surely added praise to praise. . . .
Behold a man raised up by Christ!
The rest remaineth unrevealed;
He told it not; or something seal'd
The lips of that Evangelist."

—Tennyson, *In Memoriam*, xxxi.

Theme and treatment. See John xi. "I do not think that Browning ever wrote a poem the writing of which he more enjoyed. The creation of Karshish suited his humour and his quaint play with recondite knowledge. He describes the physician until we see him alive and thinking, in body and soul. The creation of Lazarus is even a higher example of the imaginative power of Browning. That it is shaped for us through the mind of Karshish, and in tune with it, makes the imaginative effort more remarkable. Then the problem—how to express the condition of a man's body and soul, who, having for three days, according to the story as Browning conceives it, lived consciously in the eternal and perfect world—was so difficult and involved in metaphysical strangeness, that it delighted him."—S. Brooke.

The style is intentionally colloquial, epistolatory. The rendering of Lazarus in the mirror of the mind of Karshish should be compared with *My Last Duchess*.

Metrical form. Blank verse.

Page 125. Sub-title. Arab physician. Browning avails himself of the early reputation of the Arabians in the science of medicine, though their repute does not go back to the times of Christ. Cf. l. 177 and note.

l. 17. — **snake-stone.** A porous stone which when applied to a snake bite absorbs the venom.

l. 21. — **Jericho.** A town some twenty miles north-east of Jerusalem and much lower.

Page 126. l. 28.—Vespasian. T. Flavius Sabinus Vespasianus, was emperor A.D. 70-79; but during Nero's reign in A.D. 66 he was sent to conduct a war against the Jews. When he became emperor he left the war in the hands of his son Titus.

l. 29. — **black lynx.** Lynx is a common name for different varieties of a species of the cat family. All lynxes are of moderate size, limbs long, tail short; ears tipped with a pencil of hair—"tufted ear." A black lynx might well have attracted the attention of Karshish, for whether the foundation be brown or gray, the distinguishing peculiarity of the coat is that it is variegated, striped, marbled, or spotted. "Mortal man could not see a lynx more clearly than Karshish."—S. Brooke.

l. 32. — **robbers.** Cf. Luke x, 30.

l. 36. — **Bethany.** Cf. John xi, 18.

l. 37. — **plague-sores.** The plague is a severe contagious fever, characterized by the presence of sores or carbuncles. There are few accounts of the disease before the sixth century, but one is given by Rufus of Ephesus in the time of Trajan. In the disease there is the stage of invasion, that of intense fever, and the third stage is marked by the appearance of the sores, which of course establishes the nature of the attack beyond all question.

l. 40. — **scrip.** A wallet or bag; especially a pilgrim's pouch.

l. 42. — **viscid choler** (*vis'id kol'or*). Thickened or ropy

bile : a feature Karshish notes in the intermittent fever known as tertian because of the return of acute symptoms every third day.

l. 44.—**falling sickness.** Epilepsy. Cf. Shakspeare, *Julius Cæsar*, I, ii, 256.

l. 45.—**There's a spider here.** Dr. H. C. McCook finds difficulty in determining the spider referred to. Is it, he asks, the Zebra spider with its abdomen striped with white, or the Wolf spider, ash-grey with whitish spots? Both overcome their prey by springing on them, not by webs. (*Poet Lore*, November, 1889.)

Browning himself was an interested observer of spiders. See Letter to Miss Barrett, February, 1845.

l. 49.—**runagate.** A version of renegade. Med. Lat. *renegatus*, an apostate from the faith. Hence, vagabond.

l. 50.—**sublimate.** Probably a solution of bichloride of mercury used in this way for the relief of ophthalmia.

Page 127. l. 55.—**gum tragacanth** (*trag'a kanth*). A white or reddish gum obtained from plants; when treated with water it swells and forms a thick mucilage used in pharmacy and the arts.

l. 57.—**porphyry.** A fine-grained, very hard rock, hence used for a mortar for fine grinding.

l. 60.—**Zoar.** One of the "cities of the plain," southeast of the Dead Sea. Cf. Genesis XIX, 22.

l. 67.—**itch . . . to write.** A symptom recognized in classic days.

"Tenet insanabile multos . . .

Scribendi cacæthes, et ægro in corde senescit."

—Juvenal, *Satire*, VII, 51.

tang. A dagger prick, the sting of an insect. Also a twang or sharp sound. "Very good words, there's a tang in 'em."—Fletcher, *Fair Maid of the Inn*.

"For she had a tongue with a tang."

—Shakspeare, *The Tempest*, II, ii, 52.

l. 83.—**exorcization.** A form of driving away an evil spirit by the use of some spell or holy name.

Page 128. l. 89.—**conceit.** A fanciful notion or whim.

l. 100.—**Nazarene physician.** Jesus of Nazareth. See Matt. ii, 23.

l. 102.—**diurnal.** Lat. *diurnalis*, happening every day.

l. 103.—**fume.** (Lat. *fumus*, smoke.) A vague notion.

l. 106.—**As saffron tingeth.** (Arab. *zafaran*.) A substance manufactured from the dried stigmas and part of the style of the saffron crocus. It was used as an ingredient in the complicated medicines of early times. Its colour is intense, however, and its chief use was as a dye. In these days it is occasionally used to impart a yellow colour to fancy cookery.

l. 109.—**sanguine.** According to the older physiology the bodily fluids were supposed to exist in varying quantities and proportion in different persons, and the resulting temperaments were classed as the choleric, the sanguine, the phlegmatic, and the melancholic.

Page 129. l. 116.—**balm.** Gradually altered from balsam. An aromatic ointment used for soothing pain or healing wounds: here the allusion would seem to be to an eye-salve. Cf. Revelation, iii, 18.

Page 130. l. 172.—**sun throb . . . into stars.** This has no real or historical basis as a theory of astronomy.

Page 131. l. 177.—**Greek fire.** Used for the first time in the two sieges of Constantinople by the Arabs, 668-675, and 716-718. "In both sieges the deliverance of Constantinople may be chiefly ascribed to the novelty, the terrors, and the real efficacy of the Greek fire." Its composition is wrapped in a good deal of mystery, but it seems to have been a mixture of naphtha with sulphur and pitch. "From this mixture, which produced a thick smoke and a loud explosion, proceeded a fierce and obstinate flame."—Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, chap. l.ii. The use of Greek fire continued until the invention of gunpowder.

l. 194.—**tick**. A recurring click or beat as of a watch.

Page 132. l. 211.—**seeketh not to please God more**. Cf.

"The state for each most saving, is His will
For each."

—Giotto di Bondone, tr. Rossetti.

l. 215.—**proselyte**. One who changes from one creed to another. Specifically in Jewish history one who left the heathen and joined a Jewish community.

l. 227.—**he loves both old and young**, etc. It would seem that in this characterization of Lazarus, Browning must have had in mind the man who led "the spiritual life around the earthly life" more perfectly than any one else of whom we have cognizance—St. Francis of Assisi—simple, joyous, radiant, holding all animals sacred because God made them, preaching to the birds, making peace with the marauding wolf, so convinced of spiritual realities that he viewed the things of earth on a scale proportioned to the magnitude of those realities.

Page 133. l. 247.—**leech**. A physician; A.S. *læce*, one who heals.

Page 134. l. 272.—**broke bread**. Luke x, 38-42; John xii, 2.

l. 274.—**And yet was**. . . . Enrico Nencioni speaks of this poem as rendering "the impressions produced upon thoughtful pagans by the earliest news of the life and of the doctrine of Christ."

l. 281.—**borage** (*bō'radge*). The species *borago officinalis* has bright blue flowers and was formerly esteemed in the making of cordials.

Page 135. l. 291ff.—**I crossed a ridge**, etc. The road from Jericho to Jerusalem is a steep ascent, a succession of barren hills. "The mountains wear a doleful appearance, the ravines become more frightful, and the narrow passages less and less passable."—W. M. Thomson, *The Land and the Book*.

PROSPICE.

Composition and publication. Written in the autumn following his wife's death, 1861. "That noble lyrical defiance of death."—W. Sharp. Published in *Dramatis Personæ*, 1864.

Theme and treatment. Browning's view of death is rendered here with all his faith, his optimism, his love. It may be compared with his Epilogue to *Pacchiarotto* and Tennyson's *Crossing the Bar*.

Metrical form. The metre is anapestic-iambic, four-accent lines alternating with two-accent riming *a b a b*.

Page 136. Title. *Prospice* (*pros' pi sē*, or *pros' pi kē*). Look forward. (Lat., 2nd per. imper. of *prospicio*, I look forward.)

l. 19.—**life's arrears.** Browning's gratitude for the joy of life was so great that he felt in much debt to life. The darkness and pain of death helped him to readjust the balance.

l. 23.—**fiend voices.** The ancient belief was that the soul at the moment of separation from the body is the object of a struggle between the angels, whose office is to bear away the freed spirit (Luke xiv, 22) and the powers of darkness who strive to snatch it from salvation. For this reason fervent prayers are offered for a soul on the point of departure. The Litany in the Book of Common Prayer contains a petition for deliverance "in the hour of death," and the following is from the office for the dying in the Roman Breviary: "Cedat tibi teterimus satanas cum satellitibus suis: in adventu tuo te comitantibus Angelis contremiscat atque in aeternae noctis chaos immane diffugiat. . . . Confundantur igitur et erubescant omnes tartareae legiones, et ministri satanae iter tuum impedire non audeant."

"O, beat away the busy meddling fiend
That lays strong siege unto this wretch's soul."

—Shakspeare I., *Henry VI.*, III, iii, 2lf.

l. 27.—**soul of my soul.** Browning's love of his wife may be seen in *My Star*; *The Ring and the Book*, bk. I.

"O lyric love, half angel and half bird."

$$\begin{array}{r} 273 \\ 51 \\ \hline 324 \end{array}$$